

PS2

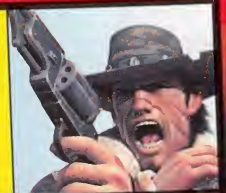
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SOLID 3:
SNAKE EATER**



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Red Dead Revolver
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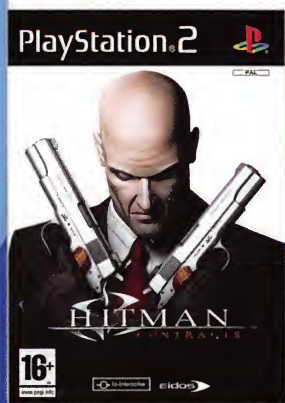
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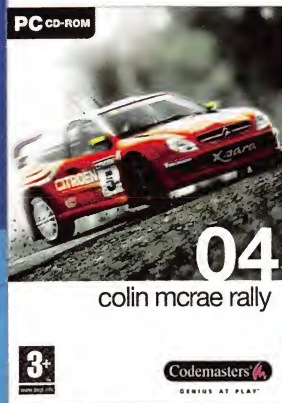
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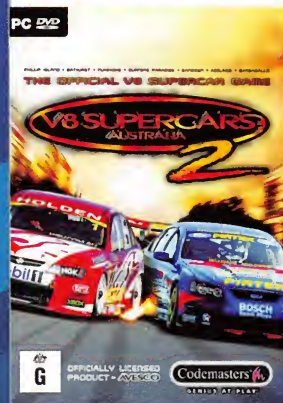
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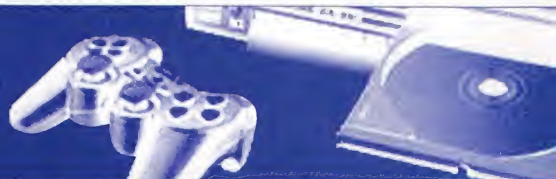
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A high strength shot of extreme car violence.

Van Helsing

The game of the film of the character in *Dracula* smashed onto your DVD.

Killer 7

Proof that even 'differently abled' folks can be evil.

MTV Music Generator 3

How to become a music mega star inside an hour.



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EDITORIAL

Reading through our big *Metal Gear Solid 3* preview this month, something struck me that I'd like to share with you - I don't like Hideo Kojima. Actually, that sounds a little strong, so let me rephrase - I don't like the way Hideo Kojima *designs games*.

I didn't like *Metal Gear Solid*. I didn't like *Metal Gear Solid 2*. I probably won't like *Metal Gear Solid 3*. This isn't a reflection of the tastes of the entire PSW staff - everyone here aside from me thinks Solid Snake is pretty much Jesus with less apostles and more guns. The sales figures tell me there's a reasonably good chance that you'd probably agree with this vaguely blasphemous assessment. Everyone loves Snake but me... so what the hell's my problem?

My problem, as much as I'm willing to admit that it even *is* a problem, is that the design philosophy underpinning Kojima's work strongly suggests that he really wanted to be a movie director rather than a game designer. The overriding impression I get from playing *Metal Gear Solid* games (part two, particularly) is that they're essentially a vehicle for Kojima to deliver the overwrought, hackneyed, political psycho-drama that Hollywood wouldn't let him put on film. He makes no effort whatsoever to integrate narrative elements into the gameplay itself. The way Kojima does things is to present the story in such a way that it is something you *stop playing to watch*. The cut-scene begins, you put down your control pad and sit back for thirty minutes of Luddite conspiracy babble. You're *ripped out* of the game so Kojima can shove his technophobe philosophy down your throat.

In my opinion, this brand of game design is thoroughly antiquated and fails to take advantage of the strengths intrinsic to videogames as a medium. Games, man, they're all about *interactivity*. They're not just a means to let players engage with content, they're a means for players to actively *manipulate* content to create their own unique experience. Kojima's work, however, is the gaming equivalent of a museum - you're free to walk around and look at whatever you want to, but just make sure you don't *touch* anything. His games are essentially *passive* experiences.

Well, I don't think gaming is a passive medium. Movies, books, television... old-media in general is the realm of passive entertainment. If Kojima is so intent on spreading his pompous pseudo-philosophy via game narratives, then he should do in a manner that befits the medium he is working with. If Snake is talking to someone over the codec, then I want to be given choices pertaining to what he's going to say next. If some incidental character has been kidnapped or trapped in a dangerous situation, then I want the power to bid them *hasta la vista* and continue playing the game. Giving players choice allows them the opportunity to interact with the narrative and characters on a level impossible to anything but a videogame. You've gotta wonder why Kojima refuses to recognise and exploit this fact.

But that's just me. I'm sure I won't like the new *MGS* game, but there's a good chance that you will. It does let you eat bugs. That's gotta be good, right?

/ DANIEL STAINES

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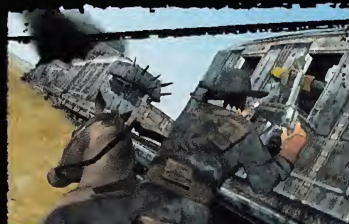
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GHOST IN THE MACHINE

Air strikes! Destructible buildings! Helicopter crashes! More action! *Ghost Recon 2* is on the way, and looks to be packing some serious heat.

GHOST RECON IS GETTING THE OVERHAUL IT

deserves courtesy of developer Red Storm. A near-total redesign is on the way to bring the super-realistic war simulator up to date. In addition to greatly improved graphics, players will be able to blow up buildings and see them realistically crash to the ground, shoot helicopters out of the sky and see downed soldiers slump to the floor in a spookily accurate way.

Graphically, all manner of technical advancements will result in the beautiful scenes shown off by these exclusive first screenshots. Backed up by a brand new camera angle, *Ghost Recon 2* will look far better than previous, decidedly ropy looking versions. In terms of gameplay, squad control will be streamlined yet the

action will be more chaotic. Red Storm is dedicated to making the playing experience as simple and hassle-free as possible and has introduced a new way of ordering your team around. This should make ensnaring the enemy in a classic pincer movement much easier.

Then there's the commitment to getting across the total chaos of war. Previous *Ghost Recon* games have concentrated on small-scale skirmishes, with hiding in bushes and waiting for enemies taking up a large portion of the game. Now the emphasis is looking to move towards full-on action, but not at the price of realism. Making your team easier to control is just the start – the whole ambition of the missions you'll be undertaking has been skewed towards providing the opportunity for more

bombastic destructive manoeuvres by your squad. In other words, less hiding and more fighting is on the cards.

All this technological upgrading allows for missions of much greater scope and size to fight through. You can order air strikes should you need to, which should allow for some truly spectacular pyrotechnic displays. Think buildings falling down like dominoes and trees being blown over, while huge explosions make massive craters in the ground right in front of you. There's little doubt that Red Storm has grand plans for *Ghost Recon 2*, and what has been shown so far is impressive to say the least. We loved the gameplay of the last *Ghost Recon: Jungle Storm* game, but loathed its rudimentary visuals. Looks like this is the facelift the series deserves...



In some missions you'll have tanks on your side.



Maps look like they will be an impressive size.



Your men will return fire in ambush situations.



Ghost Recon 2 will be located mostly in Asia.



Expect to see plenty of urban combat too.

FIRST ELEVEN

Meet your team of specialists. Which one will you be trying hardest to keep alive?



NICK M. SALVATORE

The gunner: Carries a huge machine-gun and provides covering fire for the team. Not so much interested in shooting bad guys, more interested in stopping them firing at you.

Weapon: M249 SAW



MIKE KIM

The marksman: Mike will be there to take out targets at long range. He's basically a sniper but fully integrated into the team rather than a lone operative.

Weapon: M16 SPR



DERRICK PARKER

The grenadier: Derrick is able to deliver heavy indirect firepower at dug-in troops. Also very useful for tearing apart groups of tightly packed soldiers.

Weapon: M16A4 w/M203



We think this is DMX vs Run DMC, but then again...

CAT FIGHTING

RAPPERS BEAT UP PLAYBOY STAR!

Carmen Electra takes on Busta Rhymes and Snoop Dogg in *Def Jam Vendetta 2*.

EX-BAYWATCH BABE CARMEN ELECTRA IS ONE OF THE new faces you'll be able to beat to a bloody pulp in the sequel to last year's wrestle-a-thon *Def Jam Vendetta*. The *Starsky & Hutch* gal joins Busta Rhymes, Lil' Kim, Snoop Dogg, Method Man and — gasp for air — Sean Paul as new fighters in the hip-hop follow-up that boasts a staggering 70 fighters overall.

Def Jam Vendetta 2 moves from the confines of a wrestling ring to the streets of New York, and the new combat styles are geared towards streetfighting. Hopefully the Story mode, which revolves around your attempts to take control of the hip-hop underground, will last a bit longer than in the original game. Exclusive first hands-on playtest next issue!



It's a flying kick Bruce Lee would be proud of.
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This'll teach you to dis' my lyrics, beyatch.

GLOBAL INSIDER

DANDRUFF ON THE SHOULDERS OF NEWS



FINAL FANTASY YANKED ONLINE

US punters have been given the chance to play *Final Fantasy XI* online with the release of a \$99 bundle that includes the game and the PS2 hard drive. Initial impressions of the game have been very favourable indeed. There are no plans to sell the hard drive separately though, so it's unlikely they'll be seeing a wealth of downloadable hard drive content for other games. Still no news on an Australian release date for game or hard drive, though. Humph!

SEVEN MORE YEARS!

The PlayStation2 has a ten year lifespan in total, argued Sony's Executive Vice President Andrew House recently. Speaking at the Annual Games Developer's Conference in California, House outlined plans to keep the console in production until 2010, saying up to 60 per cent of its sales were still to come. Of course, this doesn't mean that PlayStation3 will be delayed – it's still roughly scheduled to arrive sometime in 2006.

THE NEW X FILES

After a troubled start, Activision have finally proved that their X Men franchise could actually be worth playing. *X-Men Legends* is due out in September and takes the radical tact of turning the comic book license into a multiplayer turn based battler. Resembling a scrolling fighter but playing like *Final Fantasy*, Activision should be applauded for trying something new.

PUT UP YOUR DUKES

After a couple of dodgy PSone games, the *Dukes of Hazzard* are set to star in their first next-generation offering. Called *Dukes of Hazzard: The Return of the General Lee*, it's all about saving an orphanage from evil Boss Hogg by all manner of car stunts. Expect the usual sub-*Driver* sort of action driving missions, plus a slightly more rounded and attractive Daisy Duke thanks to the power of PlayStation2. Yee-haa!



It's an odd job, making Bond games. Geddit? Never mind.

007 INTEL

BOND: THE TRUTH

PSW sets you straight on all those *Goldeneye 2* rumours currently doing the rounds.

CONTRARY TO INTERNET RUMOUR THE UPCOMING JAMES

bond title *Goldeneye 2* is not in crisis. After some speculation that the game had received negative feedback from early focus groups, PSW can exclusively reveal that the game is still on track as originally planned, and on course to hit its Christmas release date. More importantly, the development team is fully confident that their much-anticipated shooter will meet all expectations.

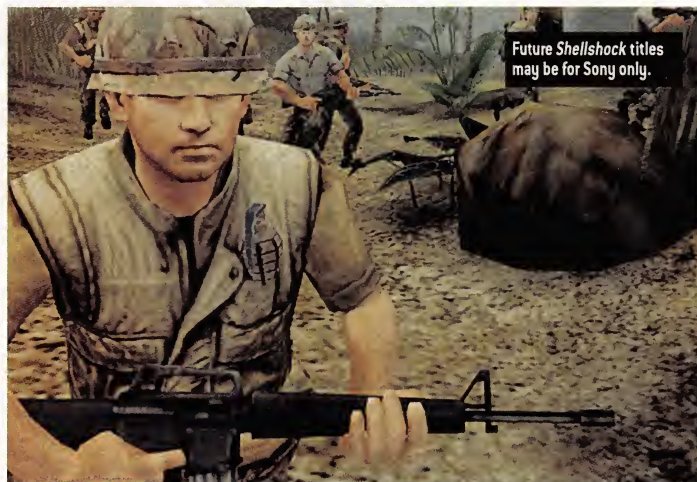
The upcoming title is set to be a radical departure from previous Bond games. Instead of playing as Bond himself, players will have the opportunity to play as a variety of infamous Bond villains, such as Oddjob (pictured above) and Scaramanga (not pictured above but still quite scary). According to our EA insider, the rumour that the game had met with poor focus group reaction turns out to be little more than the normal feedback provided by such groups, and the whole point of researching the game in such a way. While some fans may indeed have indicated their disappointment by the absence of 007 as a playable character our EA insider was keen to point out that *Goldeneye 2* was never actually intended to be a James Bond game in the

same vein as *Everything or Nothing*.

In PSW's opinion the fact that the game is called *Goldeneye 2* was always likely to cause confusion, with most die-hard James Bond fans (including us!) leaping to all sorts of premature conclusions before having the real facts to hand. In fact, EA have always been at pains to point out that '*Goldeneye 2*' has only ever been used as a codename for the project.

In any case, it would be hard to imagine how the *Goldeneye* film licence could be used effectively without completely reworking the legendary N64 shooter. Given that *Goldeneye 2* is being developed by a completely different team from the universally-loved Rare original, this seems unlikely.

Electronic Arts has been steadily improving the quality of its Bond offerings over the past couple of years, and *Goldeneye 2* is an indication that they want to develop the world of Bond in more than just the one 'action shooter' direction. We enjoyed the last Bond game *Everything or Nothing* immensely, and we're intrigued to see where *Goldeneye 2* ends up. The good news is we've been promised the world's first-look very soon. Keep it PSW!



Future *Shellshock* titles may be for Sony only.



Does this mean we'll see *Killzone* shining on PSP?

PERFECT TEAM

SONY SNAPS UP GUERILLA

The developer of *Killzone* gets its future titles signed up exclusively to Sony.

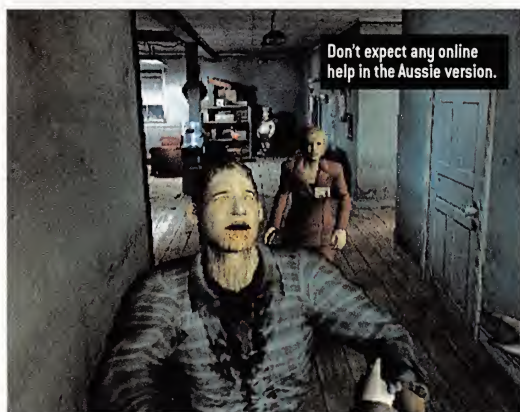
GROUNDBREAKING DEVELOPER GUERILLA, MAKER of the forthcoming *Killzone*, has signed a deal with Sony that ensures Sony distribution for all their future games. Although Guerilla's next game *Shellshock: Nam '67* will be distributed by Eidos, every subsequent game will only appear on Sony hardware. This means that we won't be seeing any future Guerilla games coming out on Gamecube or Xbox, which can only be good news for PlayStation2 aficionados. Let's hope that Guerilla's games all prove to be as brilliant as Sony seems to think they are. If the version of *Killzone* we're playing now is

anything to go by, we wouldn't be at all suprised if Guerilla soon has the reputation of Rockstar Games – the creator of *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City* and of course the upcoming *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas*.

Best of all, Guerilla has confirmed that it is working on an as-yet unnamed future console title. It's not been specified which future consoles these are, but you'd be a fool not to immediately think of the eagerly awaited PlayStation Portable, available in Japan by the year's end and over here in early 2005. Could this mean *Killzone* in your hands, as part of the first generation of truly

outstanding PlayStation Portable games? Let's hope so.

But even more excitingly, it most likely indicates that Guerilla is already starting work on all-new games for PlayStation3, so the chances are we'll be playing new *Shellshock* games set in new and even more disturbing conflicts in the years to come. We're well up for a World War I trench warfare game, for a start. Given the length of time it's taken to get *Killzone* out of the door – four years and counting – it's only fitting that Guerilla should start work on its next set of titles, before it gets left behind. Check out *Killzone* and *Shellshock: Nam '67* on the DVD.



Don't expect any online help in the Aussie version.

SHAMBLES

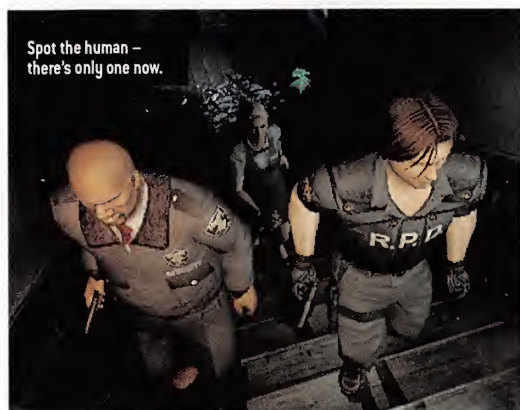
RESIDENT EVIL SHUFFLES OFFLINE

Zombie antics go unplugged in Europe - Australia likely to follow.

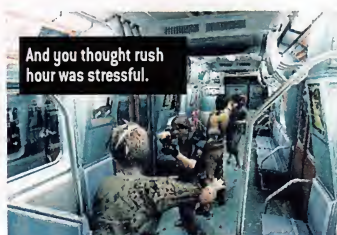
IN NEWS THAT SHOCKED NOBODY, Capcom confirmed that *Resident Evil Outbreak* will not be featuring online capability in Europe and recent reports suggest this is also likely to be the case in Australia. The latest in the *Resident Evil* series was all set to change the way we play survival horror games by incorporating online play, with teams of up to four players searching out secrets and offing zombies over the PS2 network adapter and a broadband connection. But although the game is fully playable online

in the US and Japan, maker Capcom has deemed it too difficult to release the game in Europe with its online elements intact.

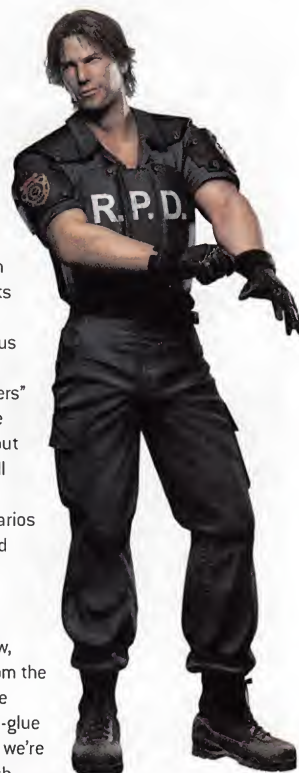
The people at Capcom told us that problems with "different languages and service providers" was the cause. We're not sure how this relates to Australia, but the probable result is that we'll only be able to play through *Resident Evil Outbreak's* scenarios with three computer-controlled characters to lend a hand and share items with. This hardly constitutes the most exciting prospect in the world, we know, but it's not all bad. Reports from the US and Japan suggest that the game is slower than a snail-in-glue without a PS2 HDD, so maybe we're not actually missing that much.



Spot the human – there's only one now.



And you thought rush hour was stressful.



PSW'S 10 MOST WANTED



1 MERCENARIES

It's *GTA* in a war with real physics and amazing artificial intelligence and lots of carnage. We haven't seen anything that's made us quite this excited in a long, long time. DO NOT underestimate just how brilliant this game could be.

2 GTA: SAN ANDREAS

A new *GTA* game can't help but make us dream of all-new streets to rule with an iron fist. 60's? 70's? Modern day? No one knows and no one cares, just so long as it's as good as the last two games. Bring it on.

3 BURNOUT 3

The fastest and most beautiful thing we've ever seen. We still can't quite believe that this is all running on PlayStation2 at all, but it is. Gimme, gimme, gimme.

4 PSI-OPS: THE MINDGATE CONSPIRACY

Torturing soldiers and throwing burning crates about the place... that's *Psi-Ops* in a nutshell. Sort of.

5 STAR WARS: BATTLEFRONT

Stormtroopers are quite simply the best bad guys in the history of bad guys. Become one of the Empire's finest and tour the galaxy wiping out the rebel scum. It's a man's life, the army, and we're ready to sign up.

6 METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SNAKE EATER

Battlefront's got us thinking about hiding in the jungle again. If camouflage is the new stealth, sign us up, we're in. This is going to be so very, very good it hurts.

7 KILLZONE

We just can't help it. Shooting things has never been quite so appealing.

8 JUICED

Closing the curtains so the neighbours can't see, sitting down to strap bits of plastic to a Nissan Micra then painting it pink. Now, that's entertainment!

9 DRIV3R

Delayed (again) until July now. That's the latest news from developer Reflections. But what a great way to fill the summer holidays. Unless you have, like, a job and stuff. But you could always quit...

10 GOLDENEYE 2

So it's got nothing to do with the seminal *N64* game then? And James Bond's not actually in it? Bugger.



GET A GRIP

McRAE COMES OUT OF RETIREMENT

The *Colin McRae* series is still going full throttle – there's a brand new game on the way!

COLIN McRAE RALLY 2005 IS COMING, AND BY THE LOOK OF these shots it's taking the series further into down and dirty photorealism. And to top it all, Colin's gone all *V8 Supercars* on us. Not that you have to guide the Scotsman through a hackneyed story where his nemesis turns out to be his brother Alister, but the career challenge mode has now fleshed-out to include 23 events, over 300 stages and 4-wheel classics, super 2-wheel rear wheel, distinctive and 4x4 car classes. With the addition of a German event, the number of rallies comes up to nine. That's a lot of rallying, by anyone's standards.

The graphics have certainly been souped-up a bit since *Colin McRae 04*, as you can see from these muck drenched shots. Crash into a tree and it'll shower you with leaves. As your car takes damage, expect to see scrapes in the paintwork, plus an innovative new visual effect that'll represent Colin's dazed vision in the aftermath of a crash. On the course potholes and loose rocks will present new hazards, and the crowds will be more animated than the cardboard cutouts we've seen previously.

The new game will need to shine, even if none of the cars will thanks to the accurate dust effects. Colin will be feeling the heat from the latest newcomer to the rallying scene, *Richard Burns Rally*. The new pretender is already touting itself as the world's most realistic rally racer, so it looks like there'll be a pitched battle for the prize when both games turn up later this year. Ironically, while both games are looking great, the drivers couldn't be in a worse state. Poor *McRae* doesn't even have a car to race in this season after losing out to a younger driver for the final Subaru seat. Burns, meanwhile, has been sidelined for at least a season while he receives treatment for a brain tumour.

Still, if nothing else *Colin McRae Rally 2005* proves that women are right after all and size does matter. The Career mode is stuffed with features, extra cars, stages and with challenges appearing in the online mode for up to eight players, there should be plenty to keep even the most ardent rally fan busy.

Expect Colin's new motor by October.



HEAD-TO-HEAD

Two drivers. Two games. But which offers the most value?

COLIN McRAE RALLY 2005		RICHARD BURNS RALLY	
Cars:	30	Cars:	8
Rallies:	9	Rallies:	9
Tracks:	72	Tracks:	36
Multiplayer:	Eight-player online	Multiplayer:	Four-player offline



The Peugeot 306: faster than your average diesel.



Another Pug, another set of icy Swedish roads to master.



There are some tarmac sections. But not that many.



Car physics is some of the best ever seen in a game.



4WD CHAMPIONSHIP

PROPHET
In 1993, Colin McRae became the youngest ever World Champion. His nickname, 'aloud', is a nod to his habit of shouting 'I'm in control' at the start of every race. He's also the most popular rally driver of the modern era.



Nothing beats a gentle drive in the country on a Sunday.





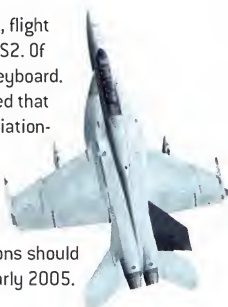
ACES HIGH

ACE COMBAT GETS TACTICAL

Will *Ace Combat 5* be a proper flight sim or an arcade style shoot 'em up? Or perhaps even a bit of both?

With a reputation for being the preserve of nerdy PC gamers, flight sims haven't exactly taken off, if you'll excuse the pun, on PS2. Of course, that's partly due to the limitations of a pad over a keyboard. *Secret Weapons Over Normandy* bucked the trend and proved that you don't need a pilot's license, a keyboard overlay or an aviation-style joystick to get off the runway and launch missiles.

It's to be hoped that *Ace Combat 5* will do the same. With over 50 licensed planes and new wingman commands there's just enough depth to justify its sim tag, while the improved eye candy and high-speed combat over 30 missions should keep trigger-happy pilots content. *Ace Combat 5* is due in early 2005.



SPORTING CHANCE

SONY BRINGS ATHENS HOME

Sony brings the Olympics into your lounge.

Sony has snatched the rights to the forthcoming Olympics in Athens. It's planning to squeeze the game out in time for the start of the event this July. Naturally the game will be fully licensed with all the stadiums mirroring their real life compatriots as closely as possible.

Seven real life Olympic locations have been shoe-horned into the game, including the Olympic Stadium for Athletics, the Markopoulo Olympic Shooting Centre and the impossibly Greek sounding Panathinaiko Stadium

for Archery. Over 30 events are represented in the full game, including swimming and athletics. These are backed up by somewhat less conventional gymnastic and shooting events, all of which adds up to an impressively diverse sporting package.

Developer Eurocom has a reasonable if not electrifying back catalogue of titles and would seem to be a good solid choice for bringing out the game in a tidy fashion in time for the competition this summer.



The high jump. It's for making lanky people look good.



Real life stadiums. Or is that stadia? Stadiae maybe?

PSW SAYS



COLIN GETS DIRTY

So it looks like the new *Colin McRae 2005* is shifting gears again, ditching beautiful shiny cars for mud-covered motors. At least there's competition this year in the shape of McRae's real-life rival Richard Burns. The competition is heating up, and we reckon it's going to be a **bumper year for rally games**. But spare a thought for poor old Colin and Richard themselves. Colin's **not even competing** in the 2004 World Rally Championship. Instead he's racing in this year's Le Mans 24 Hours, which is, let's be honest, a bit shit. And Richard has suffered from all kinds of serious health problems of late. Let's hope the two games manage to **DO THE BOYS PROUD** and give them something to look forward to.

YAWN OF THE DEAD

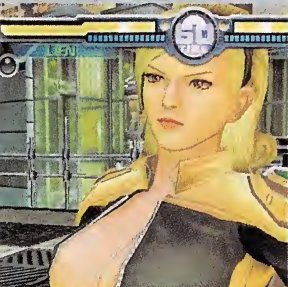
A big shrug of the shoulders while mouthing the word 'so?' was our response to the inevitable news that *Resident Evil Outbreak* probably won't be online over here. In fact, our indifference turned to **uncontrollable laughter** once the US reviews came filtering through. From what we can gather, the general feeling is that there **doesn't seem to be any point in playing online**. Any sense of community evaporates since you can't talk directly to other players, either vocally or textually. Instead you're **limited to simple**, pre-programmed commands in order to prevent motormouths from spilling the beans about solutions to puzzles. Oh, and let's not forget the fact that - without a hard-drive to back it up - the game plays like utter tosh, with loadtimes for levels somewhere within the vicinity of the half-hour mark.

NO KILLER ANNOUNCEMENT

So, after all the rumour and hype about which developers have signed up to **PSP** and what games they'll be beavering away on, Sony chose the Game Developers' Conference to show...(drum roll...long pause)... a **kiddie platform game!** And a **painfully simple-looking one** at that. Yes, *Death, Jr.* didn't so much wow the crowds as make them wish they'd gone to Nokia's N-Gage 2 announcement instead. OK, it was nothing like as bad as that. While not offering anything particularly new gameplay-wise, *Death, Jr.* did at least confirm that **the PSP is one powerful bit of kit**. At any rate, it's not like Sony to be this low-key, so we're expecting, nay, demanding, major fireworks later this year. With **EVERY SINGLE MAJOR PUBLISHER** signed up to make PSP games, they won't dare let us down. Because if they do, then we shall be very cross. And you don't want to see us when we're very cross.

GLOBAL INSIDER

NEWS CROUTONS FOR THE VIDEO GAME GUMBO



HELLO GRANDAD

SNK's venerable 2D fighting game series *King of Fighters* is finally going to leap into the third dimension on PS2. After years of 2D arcade supremacy and annual updates on the obscure and ultra expensive Neo Geo console, SNK wants to challenge current champs *Tekken* and *Virtua Fighter* in your living room. Expect almost 50 characters and the now essential inclusion of wobbly tits.

TEKKEN BY SURPRISE

Namco has revealed the full title of its new *Tekken* title. It's *Death by Degrees - Tekken: Nina Williams*. Expected to arrive on PS2 this November, this isn't a beat 'em up but an adventure game prequel to the first *Tekken* starring Nina Williams in a stealthy, shooty kind of role. PSW has also learned that Namco is about to reveal *Tekken 5*... much more on this next month.

PS3 GETS THE BLUES

The next generation of PlayStation console may be so powerful it won't use DVDs to store games. Instead, rumours are coming through that the PlayStation3 will play Blu-ray discs - a Sony-approved format with a plastic minidisk style casing that can hold up to 50 gigabytes. Can you imagine the length of the *Final Fantasy* cut-scenes they'll be able to fit on that? The mind boggles.

WHAT'S ENTERTAINMENT

Here's a first on PS2: a budget release with [albeit minor] gameplay additions. *Enter the Matrix* now comes with three minigames already unlocked in the Construct Training area and ready for you to play. If you feel like jumping over roofs with Mo'Nique or sniping enemies with Ghost, you can unlock them directly from the start. And there's also the multiplayer fighting mode to sample a bit of a mixed bag, but they'll add to the replay value.



REAPER BOY

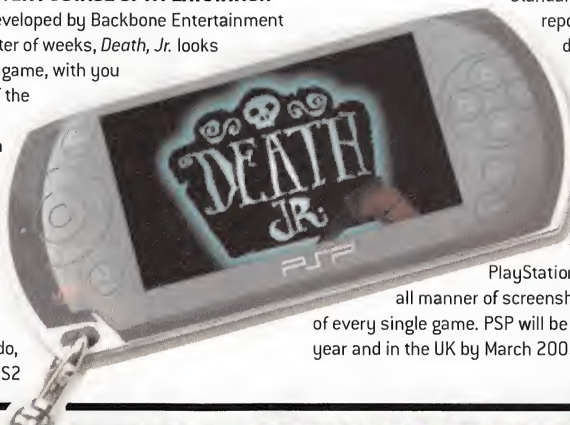
FIRST PSP GAME REVEALED!

Death, Jr. breaks the PSP silence to become the first game ever seen on the handheld.

PSW HAS SEEN THE FIRST EVER FOOTAGE OF A PLAYSTATION

Portable game this month. Developed by Backbone Entertainment and reputedly made in a matter of weeks, *Death, Jr.* looks to be a fairly simple platform game, with you playing as a kiddie version of the Grim Reaper and battling all sorts of skeletal adversaries in a Tim Burton-esque shadowy underworld. While looking to offer little new gameplay wise, it was the first chance for us to gauge the power of PSP.

Graphically, it's far beyond what current handhelds can do, looking remarkably close to PS2



standards. This ties in with our insider reports of PSP games being developed on PS2 hardware.

It all adds to the gathering mountain of evidence that PSP will be a remarkably powerful piece of kit. The only question is why Sony chose such a low-key game to show off what the machine can actually do. Still, there'll be much more on the

PlayStation Portable from PSW soon, with all manner of screenshots, new footage and coverage of every single game. PSP will be out in Japan by the end of the year and in the UK by March 2005.



That could be you over there in the helmet now.



More enemies - that's just more easy targets.

WELL CONNECTED

RATCHET GOES ONLINE

Ratchet & Clank 3 is all set to be world's first platform game to venture online. Does this mean rival *Jak III* will be left languishing in the dust?

RATCHET & CLANK 3 IS SET TO TAKE its battle with bitter rival *Jak III* to the next level. As part of the Sony online push, the classic action adventure series is shaping up to give gamers a wholly fresh look at the franchise. *Ratchet & Clank 3* is set to be the very first platform game to offer online functionality when it launches in the autumn of this year.

This isn't to say you'll be able to play the whole game online in cooperative mode with a friend, however. At the

moment *Ratchet and Clank 3* multiplayer is confined to a variety of four-player battle modes, although developer Insomniac is looking to deliver more than the usual tacked-on extra multiplayer experience. Even during the main quest, you will also quite definitely be controlling characters other than Ratchet, although there's no news yet as to whom these new fellas might be.

Meanwhile, the new *Jak* title is continuing to progress into a darker and more freeform adventure than the last

outing with Amy Hannig, writer of the *Legacy of Kain* games, steering the franchise into scary, gothic waters. It seems that some at *Jak III* makers Naughty Dog have seen Insomniac's weighty plans for *Ratchet and Clank 3*, with co-founder Jason Rubin planning to leave the company later this year. With any luck, the continuing competition between the two franchises will drive them to ever higher standards. More to the point, we can't wait to start beating up little kids when we play online.

GLOBAL | EXTRA >>

ALL THE LATEST ON THE BIGGEST PLAYSTATION2 GAMES ON YOUR SHORT-RANGE RADAR.



BURNOUT 3

We're already calling *Burnout 3* the world's greatest arcade racer. Check out these amazing shots and we think you'll agree.

> PUBLISHER EA
> GENRE DRIVING
> OUT SEPTEMBER

NOW THAT THE WORLD HAS FINALLY STOPPED SHAKING FROM the brilliance that was *Burnout 2*, we feel its safe to bring you some delicious new shots of *Burnout 3*. Still, no matter what we bring you on the page, we still won't be able to convey to you the sheer trouser-tightening excellence that the actual gameplay delivers.

Adding to the traditionally intense, metal-twisting, crash-centred action of the previous two games, *Burnout 3* now requires that you spend your time on the racing course trying to cause other drivers to crash in the most spectacular way possible. But can it possibly succeed in improving on the majesty that was *Burnout 2: Point of Impact*? Keep it strictly PSW and we'll tell you all very soon indeed.





CRASH COURSE

More high-velocity smashes from *Burnout 3*. Prepare to be amazed. This will blow you away!



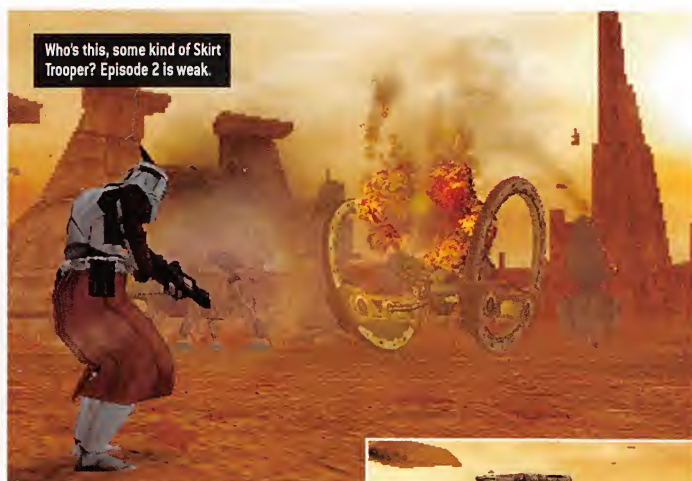
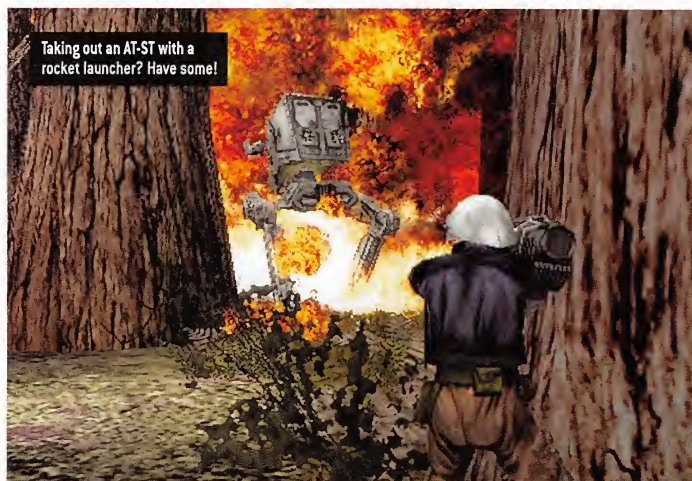


SIMPLY THE BOOST

Increase your boost bar with a range of cheap, nasty and downright dangerous moves like these.







STAR WARS: BATTLEFRONT



After 20 years of waiting, we finally get the chance to play as a Stormtrooper.

> PUBLISHER
> GENRE
> OUT

ACTIVISION
ACTION
OCTOBER

THE MORE WE PLAY STAR WARS: BATTLEFRONT, THE MORE overwhelmed we become by its beauty. By getting rid of all the silly Jedi nonsense to concentrate on the hi-tech military stuff instead, it actually manages to make *Star Wars* exciting again. Be a Stormtrooper, be a Rebel commander, kill Ewoks and drive AT-ATs. It's all here — shoehorned into this squad-based combat title.

These are the first ever shots to show some in-game action from the recent prequel trilogy. Look closely and you'll see the Republic's Clone Troopers and those weird flying insect creatures. Besides the rather tasty stylings of the Clone Trooper vehicles, there's the oddball brass contraptions used by the... OK, so we can't actually remember what happened at the end of Episode 2, because it all went a bit odd and soppy. So let's concentrate on the 'classic' trilogy action instead, which we do fully understand. Imperial scouts! AT-STs! Ewoks! Endor! Or, for those of you with a pedantic turn of mind, Endor's forest moon! *Star Wars: Battlefront* is due for release in October. It's going to be — wait for it — more powerful than you can possibly imagine. Oh yes, indeed.





ONE OF THE BOYS

Every faction in *Battlefront* has six classes. Here's how the Rebel side breaks down.



SOLDIER

Your basic grunt. In this case, a man in a stupid helmet and black waistcoat. But in the Imperial camp, it's a Stormtrooper. Oh, yes!



PILOT

As well as controlling the vehicles, pilots can repair damaged machinery and alter electronics. "Wedge, you got one on your tail!"



SCOUT

Blessed with the most speed, scout characters won't carry much in the way of heavy armour or weaponry. Brave boys.



HEAVY GUNNER

Someone's got to man the big guns, and these slow but sturdy boys are just the men for the job. Bagsie the Thermal Detonators!



WOOKIEE SMUGGLER

Unique to the Rebel's side, the Wookiees are armed with powerful Bowcasters and can distribute ammo and health to needy troopers.



REBEL SPY

Able to disguise himself as an enemy grunt, the rebel spy only reveals himself by firing his weapon at the enemy. Crafty.





SILENT HILL 4: THE ROOM



The nastiest survival horror series ever made rises from the grave to torment us. But will Konami be scaring the pants off us once more?

GOD KNOWS, THE WORLD OF SILENT HILL IS A TWISTED

place. Even normality looks nasty. But when you get into *Silent Hill*'s hell-like otherworld, well – it all goes Satanically pear-shaped. Inside mirrors outside. Internal pain and fear turn into monsters. A diseased mind spawns a vision of the world that's entirely foul. And your most perverted thoughts spring to life and try to rip your eyes out. But in spite of – okay, because of – all this, we're going back for another taste of the Town that Good Taste Forgot. And this time, we don't even need to leave the room. Because the fourth *Silent Hill* game is somehow set around one man's adventures inside his own apartment.

Except, of course, you'll be travelling to new and disgusting places from strange portals located inside this apartment. And fortunately, there are a few new surprises in store for seasoned *Silent Hill* veterans. Not to mention a whole shuddering, shambling horde of new monsters ready to expose your steaming guts. The big question is, can Konami can summon up enough horror to give the series a fourth lease of life?

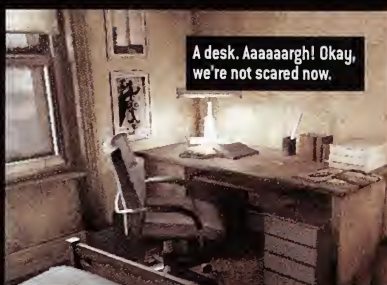
ROOM WITH A HEW

Here's what we know for sure about *Silent Hill 4*. Henry Townsend, who we don't think we've met before, is trapped in his apartment and doesn't

> GENRE	SURVIVAL HORROR
> PUBLISHER	KONAMI
> OUT	JUNE
> ONLINE	NO

remember anything about what has happened in the last few hours of his life. Henry nearly shares his first name with Harry Mason from the first game, although whether the game's designers knew that and just did it to create confusion we just don't know. It could be a red herring, a crucial plot point or just an ambivalent echo of the earlier titles.

The front door of Henry's apartment is locked, bolted, barred and nailed shut, with a warning not to go through it written in... something red. In the bathroom, there's a gaping hole in the wall, leading through a dark passage to somewhere else. As you journey through the different environments, you'll unlock more portals out of your flat that lead into strange and shocking realms of weirdness. There's a forest, an industrial area, a dungeon and a waterlogged labyrinth. Are they all part of the *Silent Hill* riddle? Maybe they belong to a different dimension? Or perhaps they belong to the Otherworld of blood and pain that the *Silent Hill* games are so fond of showing us? Or the inside of a serial killer's head. We just don't know. To be honest we wouldn't be all that surprised if we were to finish the game without being any the wiser as to what it was all about. That's *Silent Hill* for you. What we do know though is that as you return to your flat after each adventure, it becomes increasingly tainted by the Otherworld until it's totally subsumed in gore and monsters.



A desk. Aaaaaargh! Okay, we're not scared now.



Ah, go on outside. It's probably all fine. Honest.



What your flat looks like before the uglies invade.



Do *Silent Hill 4*'s secrets include voyeurism? Nice.



A terror from the bathtub. Anyone for *The Shining*?



Friends or enemies outside? Who knows?



Not *Silent Hill*. It's South Ashfield, next town along.

Perhaps the most important new element is that while you're in your flat, you'll see everything through Henry's eyes. Don't think of this as the workman-like first-person view of a traditional shooting game, though. It's more like a cunning camera angle, the kind of shaky handheld view you've seen in films like *The Blair Witch Project*. It means that instead of guiding a little man round a screen, you're seeing the horrors right in front of you. The idea of getting this close to the terrors that were previously kept safely at arms length is intriguing. If one of those shrieking two-headed baby monsters were to reach out and touch us with its cold, clammy hand

in first person mode, we'd probably wet ourselves with fear. Just the thought of it makes us shiver. But when you explore the forests and catacombs of places through the strange portals, you'll be back to controlling Henry in traditional man-on-screen style, just like in the other three *Silent Hill* games before this one.

MONSTER MASH

Konami, bless 'em, claim that this *Silent Hill* is going to feature more action. They implied that about the last one too, and it didn't. So we'll ignore that for now. But they have been very sensitive to complaints from previous games, especially when people say they're tired of slapping down the same old half-melted nurses. So the one thing that really is a bit different is the sheer range of monsters that you'll encounter.

The split-headed dogs from the previous game make a return in a new and disgusting form, snapping at your heels with their foaming, misshapen snouts. Floating corpses animated by some obscene and unseen power trail bloody limbs as they glide eerily over obstacles, ready to do you an injury. There's something immeasurably wrong about a dead man's body hovering behind you like some enormous meat puppet. More conventional hooded figures levitate over sinister altars, while corpses birth themselves out of the walls, clawing, screaming and scratching at you. A figure that has been drowned and slashed apart towers above you, ready to strike. Screaming baby bodies mottle the walls like some kind of bizarre disease. It's truly a vision of Hell.

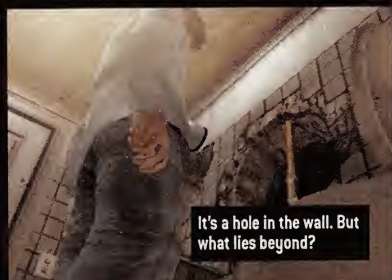
“PLAYING A SILENT HILL GAME IS LIKE PROBING A SORE POINT IN YOUR MIND.”



Henry prepares to drive a stake through this portrait.



The kitchen of Henry's flat in the real world...



It's a hole in the wall. But what lies beyond?



...And after the minions of hell have been at it.



He may look like Jesus, but we're sure he's bad.



Shop dummies or insane avatars of evil? Dunno.



Red sigils mean 'EVIL!' Or at least 'SAVE POINT!'

CHAMBER OF SECRETS

The trailer holds a few clues as to what's going on this time. Or does it?



Look! It's Douglas! Douglas the amiable detective from *Silent Hill 3*! Probably! Only younger! So, erm, does that mean there's some kind of time travel going on in *Silent Hill 4*? Or is it set years ago? This is worse than *Metal Gear Solid 3*!



Expect to find yourself faced by hordes of two-faced baby monsters, and be warned that they move disquietingly fast for things with two faces and no legs. We were going to coin the term 'toddler-strocities' here but let's face facts – it sounds worse than they look.



Another mysterious girl. Look at those sinister features. She's definitely in with the cult that secretly controls *Silent Hill*. Or is it just another cunning bluff? Dah, stop messing with our fragile minds! You're twisting our melons, man!



Taking his cue straight from the pages of a football hooligan's handbook our hero Henry takes out a wailing corpse by stamping on its loathsome neck. If this is what the good guy does, we don't want to see what the rather less savoury denizens of the town get up to.

SCARY MONSTERS

And super creeps into the bargain. This time round, there's a whole lot more of them, too.



Aargh. No. Take it away. Take it AWAY. Right now!



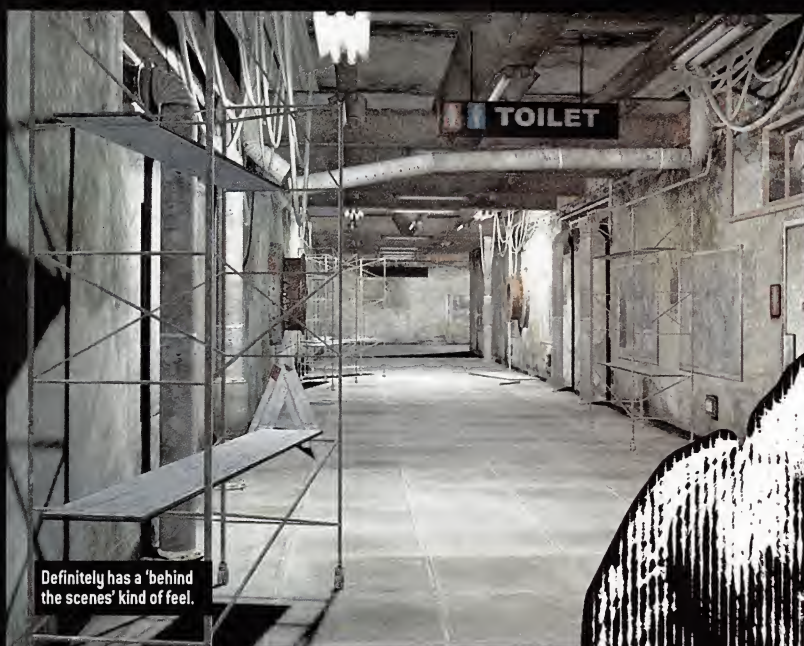
Dead babies coming out of the walls? Bad mojo.



Embed your pick into the dead freak's back.



Just be thankful you can't see much of her face.



Definitely has a 'behind the scenes' kind of feel.



Run! Run from the two headed baby monsters!

Kings of the monster ring at the moment are the two-headed baby monsters. Listen to their tortured wailing. Look at their grey, outsized hands. This is truly the stuff of nightmares, and from what we've seen so far they don't hunt alone. They come at you in packs; bawling, screaming faces with unseeing eyes, crawling across corridors in their hunt for fresh blood. These days, the disgustingly melded torsos that scuttle across the floor like spiders are starting to look positively traditional.

LOST SOULS

It's hard for a game to maintain its mystique for four episodes. While we were thrilled to see what *Silent Hill 2* was like on PlayStation2, many felt a little short-changed by the third game. The same dreary locations, the same slightly flawed gameplay. It was a top class game in itself, with graphics that are still unsurpassed, but you couldn't help feeling that it was more of the same rather than a brave new vision. Hence *Silent Hill 4*'s different approach. But just how different will it really be? Only time will tell. It seems that in spite of all that first-person viewpoint malarkey, we're in for more of the same basic type of gameplay as before. Which means it's going to be a case of wandering round,



Face the hounds of hell... [Or rot inside a corpse's shell.]

We wouldn't be too keen to get on this escalator.



All the grace and beauty of a festering wound.

"A WHOLE SHUDDERING, SHAMBLING HORDE OF NEW MONSTERS."

unlocking doors and then doing it all again. The horrible new monsters have given us pause for thought, but we've been here three times before. Let's hope the first-person view will add something new. At least there's a massive pickaxe to heft through the crawling corpses before they rip you up. That's got to be good for a laugh.

DEAD MAN'S TOWN

So, is the town of *Silent Hill* really a portal into a horrible netherworld of fetid flesh and dank decay? Or have we merely been privy to the insane, hallucinatory wanderings of a handful of deranged townsfolk? What we can say with reasonable certainty (WARNING: spoilers ahead!) is that there was a cult in *Silent Hill* dedicated to birthing some kind of dark God. The action of the first game meant that the cult was frustrated in its aims,

WHO THE HELL..?

IT'S TIME TO MEET SOME OF THE PLAYERS IN THE *SILENT HILL 4* PSYCHODRAMA.



HENRY TOWNSEND

We know who Henry is. He's the hapless amnesiac hero trapped inside his own house. What we don't know is why or how it all happened. Best steel yourself for some monster flashbacks.

THE KID

Who's the kid? Is he an innocent trapped in a hell not of his making? Or is he actually the UNSTOPPABLE DEMON SPAWN OF A THOUSAND HARPIES? It's too close to call so we're going to sit on the fence.



THE GIRL

One of two girls, in fact. Judging from our previous experience of *Silent Hill* games, we'd say you'd be wise not to trust her. Could she be Cynthia from the earlier titles? Surely not. But then again, just maybe.

LONG HAired MAN

Jesus. If the girl above isn't to be trusted, we recommend staying at least five hundred feet away from this Aphex Twin knockoff. He looks like the sort of man who'd take you apart to see how you work. Brrr...



and in the third game you played the girl who was meant to house the demon itself. Add in the fact that the cult sells drugs that cause hallucinations, and you're left with a twisted tale that could be supernatural horror, psychological weirdness or simply psychedelic insanity.

But then everyone who's played a *Silent Hill* game knows that in the end, Hell isn't other people. Hell is yourself. So we won't be even slightly shocked if we find that Harry Townsend is the very murderer who lived in the flat before, or that he's responsible for the hell-visions you'll have to guide him through. But this time, we're not really looking for answers — we're looking for the kind of visceral chills that only *Silent Hill* can give us. And just maybe, this time we won't be disappointed.

/JOFF BROWN



PUPPET MASTER

Who's pulling the strings? Who will you trust and who will you shoot full of holes?

“AN EXPLOSIVE ACTION SHOOTER IN THE SAME VEIN AS *MAX PAYNE*.”

100 BULLETS

Welcome to a comic book world that mixes *Death Wish* vigilante justice with an *X-Files* global conspiracy.

> GENRE	SHOOTING
> DEVELOPER	ACCLAIM
> PUBLISHER	ACCLAIM
> OUT	NOVEMBER
> ONLINE	NO

IF A STRANGER GAVE YOU AN ATTACHÉ CASE

containing a gun, 100 untraceable bullets, proof that someone had done you an irreparable wrong along with total immunity to exact revenge on that person, would you pull the trigger? That's the intriguing premise behind *100 Bullets*, which takes the *pulp noir* style of the eponymous comic series and turns it into an explosive action shooter in the same vein as *Max Payne*.

Writer Brian Azzarello has come up with an original storyline for the game that nonetheless covers themes familiar to fans of the comics, namely revenge, betrayal and free will. Although the comics initially focused on a variety of characters delivering their own brand of vigilante justice, they've since evolved into a storytelling platform for a grand *X-Files*-style conspiracy theory that involves a set of shadowy behind-the-scenes characters.

In such a climate, the motives of the game's characters can never be taken for granted. Take Agent Graves for example. He used to head up an enforcement arm for a powerful secret body known as The Trust — the unifying name for a group of 13 families who find themselves increasingly in dispute with one another. You're not sure whether the elderly Graves is working for a government bureau, offering clients revenge for personal kicks, or if it's all part of a hidden agenda in which the vigilantes are linked in some way. After Graves hands the attaché case to your character Cole Burns — a former ice cream seller in the comic — it's all down to you, as this is where the game's twisty-turny story begins.

CITY SLICKER

Obviously, it'd be a very short game if Burns politely declined Graves' offer and went back to doling out soft-serves, and it would be equally as tough if he was limited to just 100 measly rounds. Instead you're thrown straight into the firing line with plenty of bullets to spare and plenty of enemies to waste them on. The action is stylistically comparable to *Max Payne*, with groups of enemies scripted to appear at points along a fairly linear route and stacks of cover positions always being available. That's where the similarities end though, since *Max Payne* is a much more sombre affair.

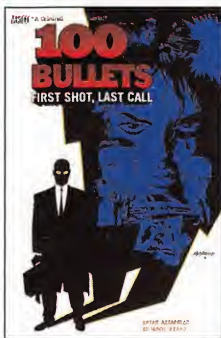
Levels aren't as corridor-based as *Max Payne* either, which is refreshing. One standout mission takes place across a series of main streets and side streets before ending up at a construction yard, with Burns kitted out in a suit and tie taking on casually-dressed thugs packing guns and baseball bats. As you start blazing away various obscenities will spew forth from the enemies' mouths as they, quite literally, line up to be shot down. What's immediately striking is the fluidity of the combat; Burns is able to jump around corners and move from wall to wall with ease and at speed, assisted by a crosshair that stays fixed even as you strafe. It makes such a difference that you wonder why other games haven't used sticky crosshairs like this.

HEADBANGER

In addition to this fixed crosshair, Burns has a stylish array of tricks up his bespoke suit sleeve. There's a blind fire attack where he pokes his gun out from cover and shoots without looking. He can fall on his back and fire too, which is handy for taking out enemies above you. Cars, barrels,

REVENGE IS SWEET

The bluffers guide to the *100 Bullets* comic series so far.



FIRST SHOT, LAST CALL #1-5

Agent Graves approaches an ex-con called Dizzy Cordova and offers her the chance of revenge against two crooked detectives who murdered her husband and son. Also, a down-and-out bartender takes revenge against a mystery woman who planted child porn on his computer.



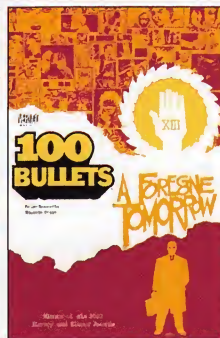
SPLIT SECOND CHANCE #6-14

Dizzy goes to Paris to dig up the truth about Graves. He's part of the Minutemen, a group who offer victims of crime the chance to take revenge. The Minutemen are in conflict with another unidentified group. Graves offers a gambler, a waitress and Burns 100 bullets each.



HANG UP ON THE HANG LOW #15-19

This is more of a one-off story that sees Graves give a man called 'Loop' Hughes the chance to get to know his father who abandoned him as a child — or kill him. It's unclear why Graves wants the man dead. Loop and his father begin to bond, but run into trouble with the Mafia.



A FOREGONE TOMORROW #20-30

More information is revealed about Graves' enemy Shepherd when the 13 families of the Trust gather for a summit in Atlantic City. Meanwhile, Dizzy is now Shepherd's right-hand woman with connections to the Trust and the fate of the Minutemen in Atlantic City.



THE COUNTERFIFTH DETECTIVE #31-36

Another one-off story sees private detective Milo Garret left bloody and bandaged after a car crash. Graves appears in the hospital to tell him that the crash was no accident, leaving Milo no option but to face up to his murky past and the possibility of taking revenge.



SIX FEET UNDER THE GUN #37-42

Six standalone chapters revisit characters such as Dizzy and Cole, showing how their lives have changed since meeting Graves. The conflict between Graves and Shepherd grows and cracks begin to appear in the alliance between the Trust's 13 families.



Burns regains his memory in Atlantic City.



Even with dual pistols there's ammo to spare.



It's not wise to stand in the open for too long.

62/300



Hold off firing for a few seconds to target areas.



Now might be a good time to fire blindly.

100 BULLETS FACT!

> TON UP

Creator Azzarello plans to end the series at 100 issues, which means it's now halfway through its life.

> QUICK ON THE DRAW

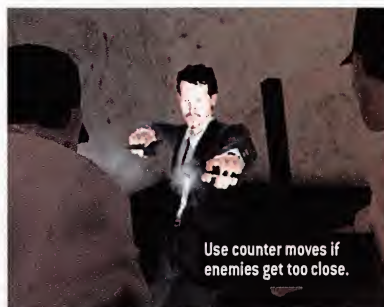
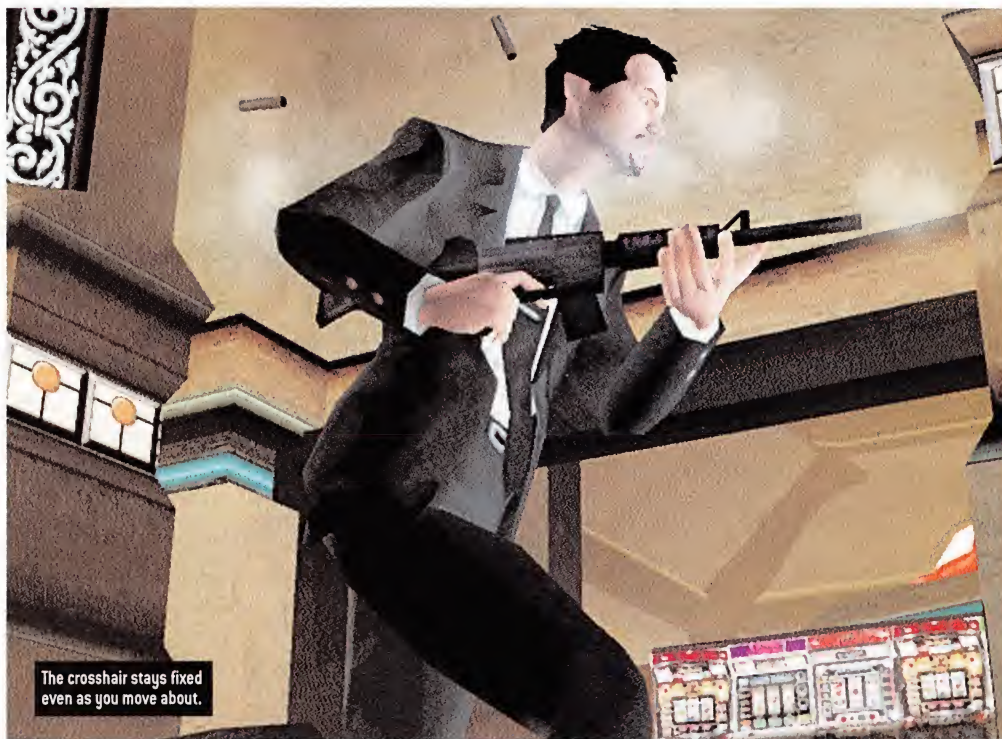
The comic's artist, Eduardo Rizzo, provides the game's art and designed original character Snow Falls.

> GLOBE-TROTTER

There are 24 levels spread across four cities: Atlantic City, Los Angeles, Paris and the New York underworld.

> STARS IN THE MAKING

100 Bullets shares its graphics technology with *The Red Star* (see p62 for our exclusive first look).



WHAT THE MAKERS SAY

"IN KEEPING WITH ITS COMIC BOOK ORIGIN, WE WILL CHALLENGE PLAYERS TO 'THINK BEFORE THEY SHOOT' AND ALLOW THEM TO EXPLORE THE MORAL IMPLICATIONS OF THEIR ACTIONS."

water mains and so on can be blown up, while traffic signs can be made to fall and crush enemies with a well-placed shot. Bullet-time is surprisingly absent from all of this, though the developer claims there's another feature in the game that won't be revealed until May that'll blow the oft-copied *Max Payne* slo-mo shooting mode into next week. We reckon this might have something to do with an extraordinary cinematic sequence we witnessed in which Burns took on multiple opponents simultaneously by firing dual pistols in different directions. At least we hope so, because it looked rather good.

When close combat is called for, Burns relies on a number of counter-attack finishing moves, depending on which weapon he's carrying. Slitting someone's throat with a knife, knocking them to the ground and then blasting their face off with a shotgun is one of the more grisly executions players can hope to be treated to. Unfortunately, enemies are usually mown down in a hail of bullets before they're close enough for you to perform this sort of move on.

URBAN CHAOS

Acclaim has also revealed a couple of early work-in-progress stages. The first is a boss encounter against an enemy who appears through gaps in a broken wall while you move behind pillars to avoid his fire. The idea is to use Burns' blind fire ability while hiding and wait until he reloads before moving out from cover to aim properly. The second is a graphically impressive cut-scene when Burns regains his memory and the gritty industrial area he's in dissolves into a vibrant casino scene from his past. Since the game could yet prove to be a bit generic and the shootouts a tad repetitive, we're hoping for more magical moments like this to cohesively work the story into the actual gameplay.

Perhaps the addition of a second playable character will help keep the action fresh too. Afflicted with the truly terrible name of Snow Falls, she's a black street fighter created exclusively for the game by the comic's creator Brian Azzarello. Unfortunately, you won't get to choose when to play as her, and since the developer declined to show us anything of her in-game we can't say what kind of combat moves or weapons she might possess. But because you play through some levels twice or even three times with a different character, your actions as one will affect the other – at least on a very basic level. For example, if you disable an alarm system or open a locked door as one character the other will have an easier route through the same level later on.

100 Bullets is shaping up very well indeed, combining both style and substance. It promises a multi-faceted story full of morally corrupt characters and some sharp dialogue that complement the stunning set pieces.

FIRST OPINIONS

What could have been a fairly routine third-person shooter is enlivened by a fascinating premise and some stylish gameplay moves. While *100 Bullets* is clearly influenced by *Max Payne*, it tells its own distinctive story and features enough original touches to create room for itself in an increasingly crowded genre. More on this soon.

/ JONATHAN TODD

DIGITAL DOUBLES

There's something vaguely familiar about *100 Bullets*...



100 BULLETS



100 BULLETS



100 BULLETS



MAX PAYNE 2



BAD BOYS 2



RISE TO HONOUR

The suit and tie and quiffed hair are obvious similarities, but it's the world-weary expressions that really clinch it. Both guys end up looking like they've been to hell and back. And then some.

Scripted scenes and boss characters figure in both games. In *100 Bullets* you can take cover anywhere though, unlike the predetermined hiding spots forced upon you in *Bad Boys 2*.

In *100 Bullets* you can resort to counter-attacks or hostage-taking, whereas in *Rise to Honour*'s shooting levels you're stuck with the gun, despite being a martial arts whiz.



Lean, shoot, retreat to cover - works every time.

"FULL OF MORALLY CORRUPT CHARACTERS AND SHARP DIALOGUE."



You can shoot up pretty much anything you like.



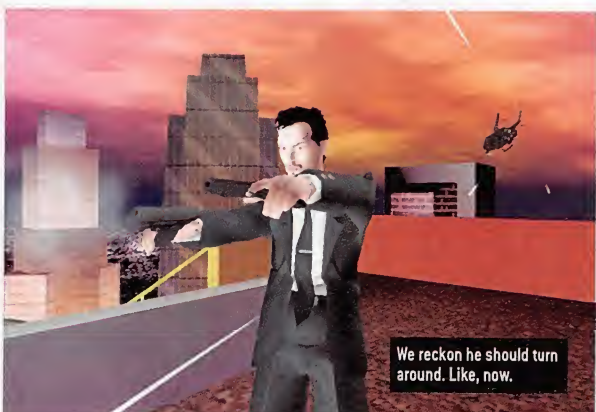
It really is just like Max Payne, isn't it?



Don't worry, there's plenty of gore really.



Bash his head off a wall if he gives you any lip.



We reckon he should turn around. Like, now.



> THE MEN FROM MARS

Don't expect a hearty welcome from the occupants of Area 51. Do expect to be shot at.



"FIREFIGHTS ARE AN EXERCISE IN PURE TRIGGER-FLEXING JOY."

AREA 51

The truth is out there. Sit tight as we uncover what could well turn out to be one of the best first-person space shooters of 2004.

> GENRE	SHOOTER
> DEVELOPER	MIDWAY
> PUBLISHER	MIDWAY
> OUT	OCTOBER
> ONLINE	YES

EVER HAD ONE OF THOSE SO-CALLED MATES

who revels in putting a downer on every little highlight in your life? You know the sort. Just as you're showing off the pretty young thing you chatted up down the pub last week he only goes and walks through the door with Charisma Carpenter on his arm. Then while everyone's enjoying your snaps from a week on the Gold Coast, he decides to break out his Las Vegas videos. And when you get the lads round to witness the *Saving Private Ryan*-esque brilliance of *Medal of Honor: Frontline* he has to be the one to spoil the party by asking: "So, anyone else played *Halo* then?"

Well gentlemen, it's payback time. No longer do we have to endure those green-eyed looks of envy at the Xbox's best game because soon we'll have our own masterclass in how to rip chunks out of alien hordes. And we're not talking about *Killzone* this time, either.

The quality of *Area 51* is discernable from the minute you pick up the pad. Like *TimeSplitters 2* before it, the controls are spot-on and make firefights an exercise in pure trigger-flexing joy. There's no jerky sluggishness when moving the crosshair about, and after only a few minutes getting to grips with the controls you can relax into a game that oozes atmosphere.

THE TRUTH IS OUT WHERE?

The popularity of the *X-Files* and *Roswell* have made the whole alien conspiracy thing a bit clichéd these days, so the last thing we need is another hackneyed take on the little-green-men-from-Mars storyline. Fortunately, the makers of *Area 51* appear to agree. Forget the nonsensical ramblings of Mulder and the mildly arousing Scully – *Area 51* is a hardcore shoot 'em up with a genuinely intriguing and seemingly straightforward plot that escalates chillingly out of all control. As part of a hazardous materials clean-up team, you're called to Area 51 to sort out a scientific blunder. We don't want to give too much away, but it's a bit more serious than a split Thermos flask. Expect to encounter blotchy puss-filled faces, fires raging out of control and all manner of chaos.

This initial sense of confusion adds to the trepidation and uncertainty while cementing the whole Area 51 mythos of need-to-know secrecy. It's not very long before the initial stand-off is replaced by balls-to-the-wall, muzzle-flashing, lead-spewing panic. At this point it's not difficult to see where the *Halo* comparisons stem from. Stumble into a room for some respite and you might witness a squad of soldiers desperately struggling against creatures coming at them from all directions. Wherever you look there are blinding gunfights, strewn corpses, rampant pandemonium and freakish creatures. Then you realise that the creatures aren't that unfamiliar or indeed other-worldly. Hold on, isn't that a lab coat he's wearing?

Making you a member of a Hazmat team is a deliberate decision by the developer to erase the near invincible Arnie-like quality that most lead characters possess. You're not born a hero – you have to become one. Luckily, you do know how to fire a weapon, but that's pretty much the extent of your combat expertise. This relative normalacy ensures that we as players identify with our protagonist and don't feel entirely emasculated in the face of his gun-slinging bravado.



AREA 51 FACT!

> WHAT'S AROUND THE CORNER?
Area 51 is split into eight huge levels. The base is mainly corridor-based, so there's no running from a fight.

> NAILED IT
Chris Vrenna provides the game's music score. He was one of the founding members of Nine Inch Nails.

> SPILL SOME BLOOD
There are over 15 types of weapons and abilities, including those powers you inherit from the mutant DNA.

> STAN THE MAN
Stan Winston, who designed the monsters in *The Suffering*, has contributed the artwork here too.



Stop the infamous 'greys' from taking over the base.



You battle both aliens and mutated scientists.

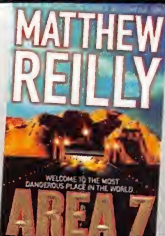


Keep team-mates alive and they'll fight alongside you.

CONSPIRACY THEORIES

Can't get enough of alien abductions and dodgy goings-on in the desert? Then check these out.

BOOK



AREA 7 BY MATTHEW REILLY

Arguably the most exciting writer in print today. His novels will leave you truly exhausted by their pace and incessant action. Area 7 takes a slightly different look at the secret US test areas in the desert when a rogue squad of soldiers proceed to hunt the President down during a routine facility inspection. Of course, not all is what it seems at this secret location.

FILM



INDEPENDENCE DAY

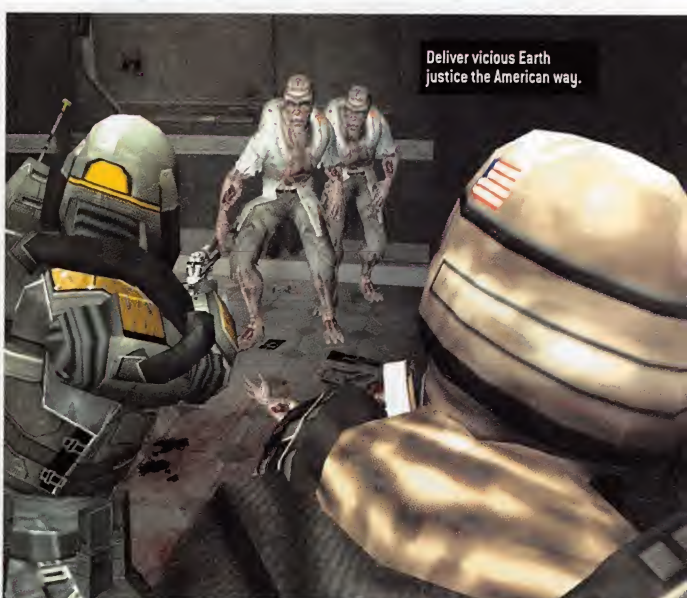
Boasting some stunning special effects in the build-up to Earth's near-destruction, Independence Day then descends into utter cheese. But if you can look past the preposterous ending where Will Smith and Jeff Goldblum somehow manage to save the world with a floppy disc, it gives a good indication as to what you can expect from Area 51's secrecy-shrouded innards.

TV



ROSWELL

Seeing as the whole world has already seen each episode of the genius that was The X-Files three times over, we thought we'd suggest something a little different. More like a US high school drama series, Roswell centres on four locals trying to keep their mysterious past a secret. Unfortunately the tale is pretty much over and done with after the first series.



Deliver vicious Earth justice the American way.



Some of the shootouts are what you might call 'epic'.



The mutants are rather attached to their lab coats.

WHAT THE MAKERS SAY

"IN AREA 51 YOU EXPERIENCE A CHILLING GOVERNMENT COVER-UP IN THE ONLY FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER THAT EXPLORES AMERICA'S SECRET MILITARY FACILITY. THE CONSPIRACIES ARE FAR WORSE THAN ANYONE EVER IMAGINED."

Initially you're accompanied by a squad of armed investigators, but this is most definitely not an attempt to inject some *Rainbow Six 3* squad based strategy into the mix. You have no control over their actions but they will ask you to do certain tasks and chatter to each other over the radios. It's worth keeping them alive for as long as possible, because they'll provide you with extra firepower. Likewise, when you walk into a room and find other soldiers struggling to survive, your first thought should be to protect them so that they might join up with you and return the compliment by watching your back later on.

Half Life seems to have been a major inspiration for *Area 51*, especially where the plot's concerned. Everything unfolds before you, the player's eyes. There are no cut-scenes or pace destroying movie segments. If a scientist starts to blather on about air-borne infections you can politely listen or simply walk away. The world isn't just your domain and life goes on without you. It's up to you to dive in, piece together what's going on and try to keep your vital organs intact while you're at it.

TRIGGER-HAPPY TACTICS

While *Area 51* is about as far removed from a survival horror game as *Matchbox 20*'s musical credibility is from *Radiohead*'s, there are still numerous moments of genuine fear packed into its infected innards. Like when the doors burst open to unleash a wave of leaping bug-like creatures which are in your face before you can loose off a single bullet. When this happens there's little point in trying to conserve ammo. Just do what *Arnie* did in *Predator*: give it your best war cry and let rip with everything you've got.

As we've already mentioned, your first engagements involve the mutated remnants of *Area 51* staff. But they're no shambling homage to those cheesy zombie flicks of the '80s that've recently become all the rage once more. No, the undead of *Area 51* move with the speed of an Olympic runner and the bounce of boobies on a trampoline. Picking them off requires some decent trigger work and a fair bit of ducking and dodging. Some of the mammoth gun battles seem to last for ages, with wave after wave of freakishly deformed man-beasts frothing for a chomp of your tasty flesh.

Like steel-toed workman's boots, heavy-duty power tools and lording it over the BBQ every summer, *Area 51*'s arsenal is made for real men. The shotguns can decapitate, the twin handgun action would easily meet with John Woo's approval and the thundering machine guns just beg to be unleashed on a cranked-up surround sound system. Yep, the guns are big, the muzzle flashes are blinding and the damage inflicted is a bit like taking a wrecking ball to a glasshouse.

The whole *Area 51* vibe plays a huge role in the unfolding plot and versatility of this game. It's not just the environments that get a new splash of colour every so often to lend a bit of diversity to your progress. The whole game dynamic shifts courtesy of those damned aliens and their infectious diseases. Where's cuddly little ET when you need him, eh?

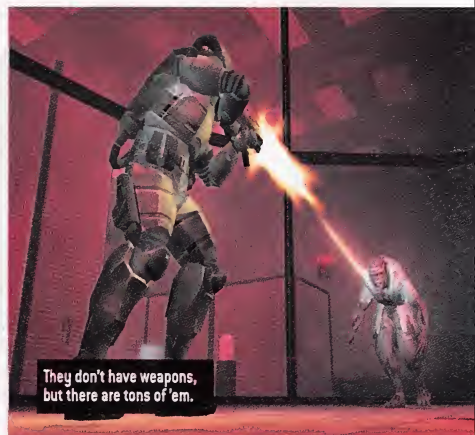
Interestingly, the game's AI becomes smarter as you progress further. It's not long before *Area 51*'s monstrosities attack strategically and in co-ordinated groups.



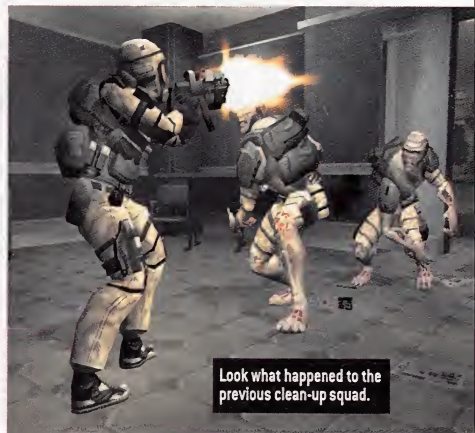
"YOU'RE NOT BORN A HERO – YOU HAVE TO BECOME ONE. YOU KNOW HOW TO FIRE A WEAPON BUT THAT'S ABOUT IT."



Like Halo and Killzone, the guns cover half the screen.



They don't have weapons, but there are tons of 'em.



Look what happened to the previous clean-up squad.



FIVE THINGS YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT AREA 51 BUT WERE TOO AFRAID TO ASK.

■ Although it doesn't actually exist and you never heard it from us, Area 51 is situated approximately 100 miles north west of Las Vegas in the Nevada desert.

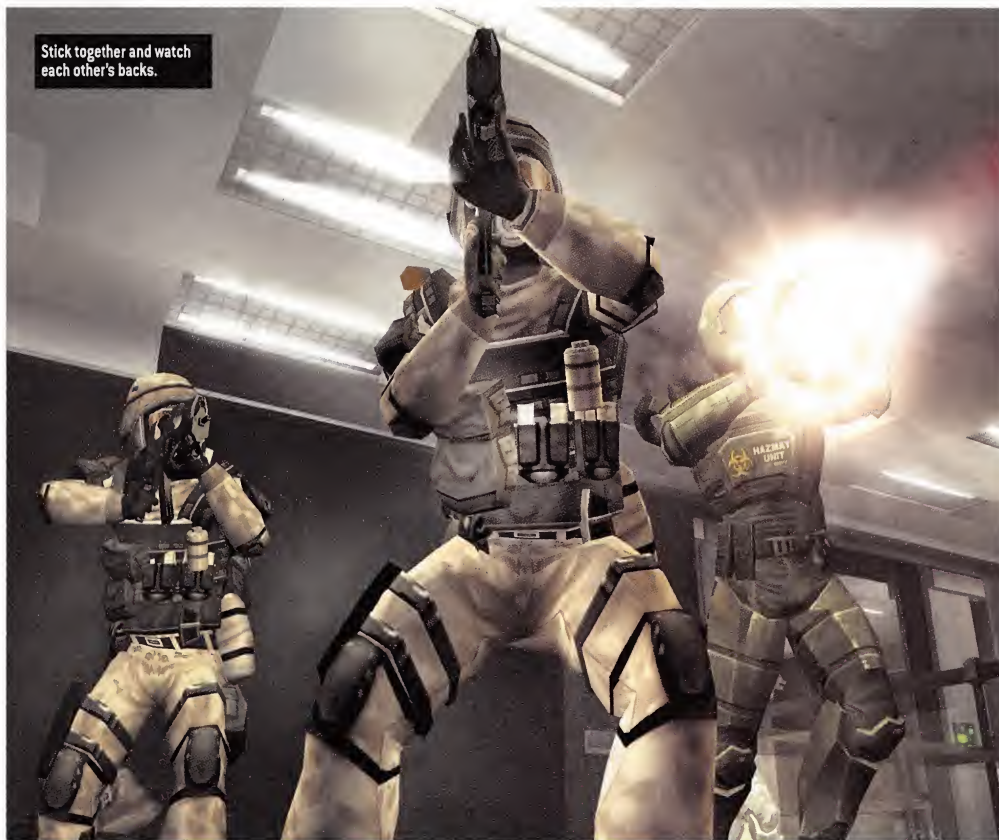
■ Without the secret tests carried out within Area 51, Bono, the Edge and Adam Clayton might be called something crap like "Four Very Rich Irish Blokes." Thankfully for them Area 51 was the birthplace of the U2 — America's top-secret spy plane.

■ Local Highway 375 has now been unofficially renamed Alien Highway and the little desert town of Rachel has become a spiritual home for trailer-owning UFO nuts hoping to spot strange lights in the sky.

■ When local workers were seriously injured by an unknown toxin in 1994 the government wouldn't tell the hospital what the substance was and the workers later died. A court case brought about by the workers' families was unsuccessful because the government denied all knowledge of the toxins, work place and even the workers themselves. Bastards eh?

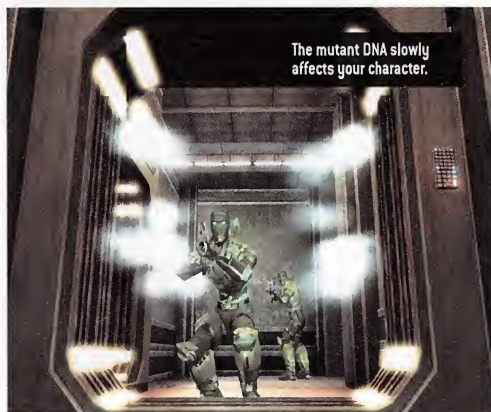
■ Workers are ferried to and from the base on a special plane out of Las Vegas airport that has no call sign and doesn't exist, even when it's sitting on the runway.

Stick together and watch each other's backs.

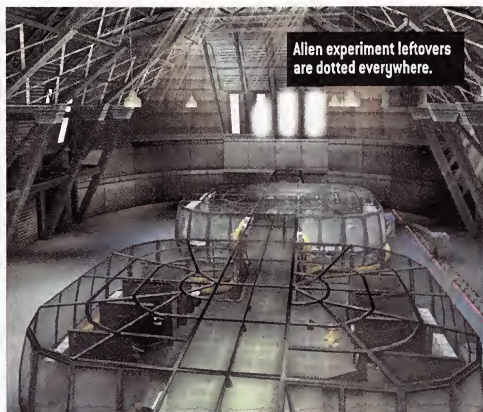


“EXPECT YOUR SHOTGUN TO LOOK PATHETIC NEXT TO SOME OF THE HARDWARE IN THE R&D DEPT.”

The mutant DNA slowly affects your character.



Alien experiment leftovers are dotted everywhere.



The base is almost gutted by out-of-control fires.



The scripted action scenes are very effective.



As if that's not enough to make you soil your hazard suit, you'll also have to contend with the mutant gunk coursing through your veins. Although you're wearing a protective suit it's not enough to stop mutant DNA getting through. To visually represent your descent into mutant-land the screen slowly changes as your blood becomes infected. Antidote kits can be used to stave off the full effects of the virus, but being half-human half-weirdo does hold some advantages – heat vision being one of them.

The deeper you go into *Area 51* the more black operations and scientific experiments you'll discover. Since most of the work in *Area 51* is geared towards weapons research, expect your piddling little shotgun to look decidedly pathetic next to some of the portable hardware in the R&D department. Fortunately, you can use what you find to take on the mutant aliens at their own game. Obviously, a little bit of help from some of your otherworldly chums wouldn't go amiss either. We don't want to spoil it all for you now but let's just say that some alien infighting leads to you getting help from unexpected quarters.

IF LOOKS COULD KILL

All this talk of gaming goodness and we haven't even mentioned quite how brilliant *Area 51* looks yet. Until now, that is. Sure, it might not be the same giant leap forward that games like *Gran Turismo 3* displayed when we first saw them on PS2, however *Area 51* proves that there's plenty of life in the old girl yet. PS3? Pah! When *Area 51* was first shown to the masses there were many who mistakenly thought it was an Xbox game. Need we say more?

Spine-tingling atmospheric lighting effects, stunningly realistic character movement and artistically designed environments are the order of the day here. Meanwhile the creatures have been designed by the same man responsible for *Jurassic Park*, *Predator* and *Aliens*. In addition to all the graphical treats, the sound provides a suitably bombastic aural assault. Put the graphics and the sound together and it's a bit like like J-Lo stepping out of the shower to ask if she can put your dinner on. *Area 51* not only looks the part – it says all the right things too.

And of course it wouldn't be a [potential] *Halo*-beater if it wasn't online. When it's finished *Area 51* will be able to support 16 players gunning for each other online with a multitude of play modes to keep everyone content long after the single player game has been trounced. There's even a split-screen mode, but sadly no co-operative missions. Further down the line there'll be more levels available for download to keep multi-player mayhem fresh and frenetic. But even in single-player *Area 51* looks set to offer trigger happy gamers a battle of titanic proportions. We'll be watching this one very closely over the coming – and so can you, courtesy of this month's DVD. Yay us!

FIRST OPINION

Beautiful, clever and stupidly violent, this is shaping up to be an essential blaster. Takes its cues from classics like *Halo* and *Half-Life* and paints it all with some of the best graphics PlayStation2 can offer.

/ MIKEY FOLEY



They try to use superior numbers to surround you.

WHAT THE F**K WAS THAT?!

Close encounters of the third kind, *Area 51* style.

BUG



In a moment reminiscent of *Halo*, these bugs start swarming towards you. They're easily dispatched but dangerous in large numbers.

DANGER

MUTANT



He used to be your buddy, but now he's a hunchbacked weirdo with a gun who's intent on plastering bits of you all over the ceiling.

DANGER

HOLY SHIT



It's big, ugly and likely to rip you a new one at the first available opportunity. Of all the aliens we've seen, this one looks the hardest.

DANGER



Nick the aliens and mutants' bizarre weapons and abilities to use against them.



Take cover behind whatever you can find during the mammoth shootouts.



Ignore their anguished expressions and let loose.



Just imagine if the online potential is realised.

**PSW
EXCLUSIVE!**
YOU WON'T SEE
THIS ANYWHERE
ELSE! FACT!



> COLD CALLING

"Hello. Is that Pizza Hut?
Great. I'd like to get a
twelve inch deep-pan
meat feast delivered to..."

"THERE ARE NO PUZZLES
AS SUCH, AND THERE'S NO
ONE TO SHOOT EITHER."

FAHRENHEIT

Described as everything from a interactive psycho-thriller to a DIY film, we uncover what this barmy French adventure game is really about.

> GENRE	ADVENTURE
> DEVELOPER	QUANTIC DREAM
> PUBLISHER	VIVENDI
> OUT	NOVEMBER
> ONLINE	NO

YOU'VE JUST STABBED A STRANGER THROUGH

the heart in a restaurant toilet, but can't remember why. Your wrists are bleeding from three symbols cut into them by the murder weapon, but you've no idea what they mean. And worst of all, you still haven't taken a dump and your food is getting cold. What do you do next?

You could just stroll back out into the diner as if nothing happened and polish off the rest of your meal. You could make a run for it and not even bother paying the bill. But if you don't want to get caught, you might consider dragging the body into one of the cubicles, washing the blood off your hands and face and scrubbing the floor clean. Whatever you decision, in *Fahrenheit* the consequences of your actions will follow your character Lucas Kane and everyone else in the game with equal measure.

That's because you don't just control Kane. At designated points in the game you switch to other characters like Carla Valenti and Tyler Miles (the two cops on Kane's tail), Kane's ex-girlfriend Tiffany, or even Kane's brother Marcus (who's a priest). Going back to the restaurant toilet scenario, your decision whether or not to clean up will affect the amount of progress you can make searching for clues and evidence as Carla Valenti shortly after. Forget to wash and a waitress comes forward whom Valenti can interview to say that she saw a bloody Kane fleeing from the scene; touch lots of objects in the toilet and she can find fingerprints. Your first goal as Kane is to leave the restaurant, but the interesting part as far as how the story develops is the way you go about it.

DAZ DOORSTEP CHALLENGE

These choices continue all the way through the game. In the next scene Kane wakes in his apartment wearing the same clothes and with bloodstained bed sheets. What will you do? Options range from simple tasks such as bandaging your wrists and taking paracetamol to story-altering decisions like washing all the sheets and hiding his clothes. The police are well on their way after hearing reports of screaming coming from Kane's apartment during the night, so these decisions are more time-sensitive and pressurised than usual.

Not that you know this info beforehand in order to prepare, of course. *Fahrenheit* steals the split-screen technique from 24 to show what's going on in different places at the same time, in this case the sudden appearance of a detective approaching Kane's apartment. While the 'tec raps on the door, you have a limited amount of time to dispose of anything that you think could incriminate you. Hide the clothes but overlook washing the sheets, for instance, and you get a choice of four dialogues to come up with a plausible excuse why the nosy cop shouldn't enter the bedroom.

Later it's the turn of Valenti and Miles to be in the spotlight, with the former at the cop shop and the latter back in his apartment and late for work. By calling the other character, sending faxes and exchanging info, the game switches control between them and lets them collaborate even though they're separated. Valenti quickly discovers that the restaurant murder is just one of seven identical ritualistic killings that crop up every seven years dating back to the beginning of the 20th century.





FAHRENHEIT FACT!

> CLIFFHANGER

The original plan was to release *Fahrenheit* episodically, with each instalment at less than budget price.

> GRAND FINALE

There are four completely different endings to the game and it takes about ten hours to see one.

> LONG SHOOT

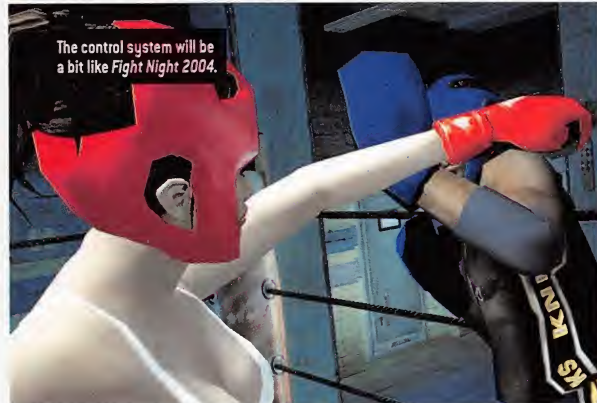
Quantic Dream has its own motion-capture studio. *Fahrenheit* took 30 actors three months to capture.

> BODY HOPPING

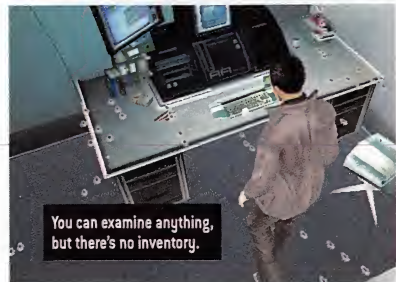
The developer's first game, *Omikron: The Nomad Soul*, also let you control multiple characters.



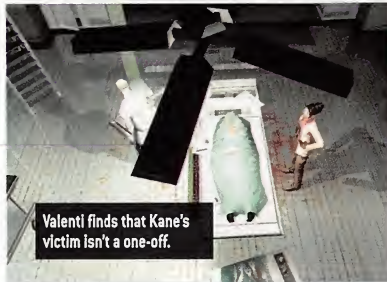
One of the action scenes is a massive police chase.



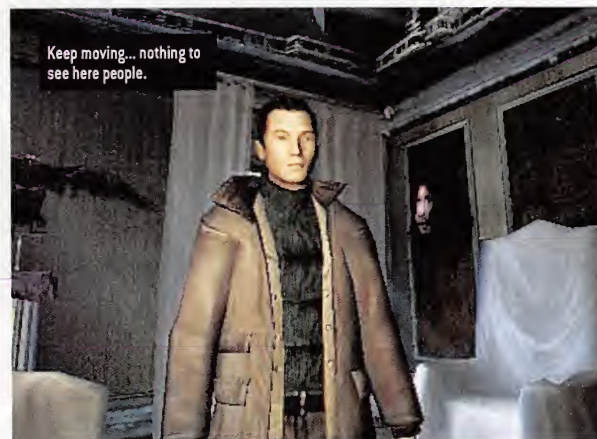
The control system will be a bit like *Fight Night 2004*.



You can examine anything, but there's no inventory.



Valenti finds that Kane's victim isn't a one-off.



Keep moving... nothing to see here people.

FEVER PITCH

Quantic Dream's CEO David Cage on how *Fahrenheit* intends to invigorate the adventure genre with interactive storytelling.



>> Is the adventure game a dying genre? Our goal is to try to renew the adventure genre. No one wants to play the old style anymore where you have 200 objects in an inventory and must combine them in the right place at the right time. At the same time, I strongly believe that telling a story is the most appealing experience you can create.

>> How important is the story in your game? People believe that interactive storytelling is something that can't exist. Storytelling is linear and interactivity is non-linear, so putting the two words together can't work. We have a theory that a story is like an elastic band: it has a start, middle and end and these points are fixed, which allows us to control the pacing, but there's enough latitude so the player can deform the band depending on their actions. For example, in the restaurant Lucas can't yell that he's the murderer or dance naked on the

tables because it's out of context, but within the context he can do anything.

>> With *Fahrenheit* being so open, how do you move the story along? What's expected of you is always obvious. It's never like you need to explore an entire area to find the right item hidden somewhere. And when it's not obvious, you have different options. For example, in the restaurant there's nothing that you have to do because you can just leave, but there are things that make sense such as discovering the blood on your body by looking in the mirror.

>> It's a little odd controlling the hero and then the people trying to catch him... It's strange, because you may think that on one side you control the murderer and on the other you control the police with different goals. They both want to understand what happened, but it's just that they have different perspectives.

>> A criticism of *Fahrenheit* might be that the player doesn't actually do an awful lot... It's really important that all of your actions have consequences on the way the story unfolds, so it's not just like you're watching a movie and sometimes need to press A or B – like the old *Dragon's Lair* game, for example.



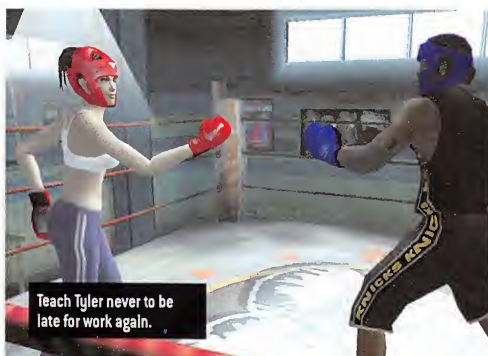
Fight giant dust mites in one of Kane's visions.



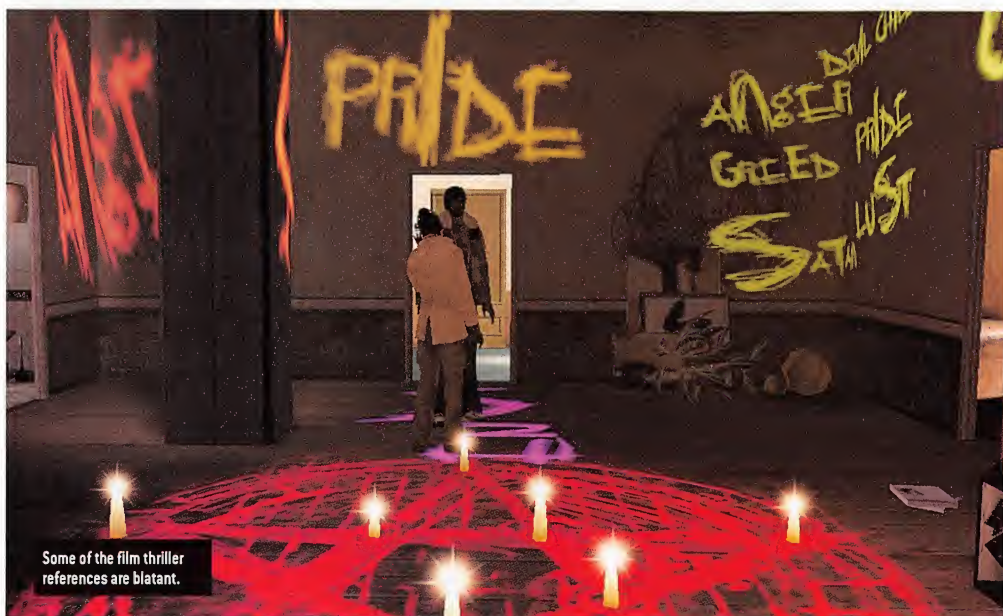
Get out of the toilet before the cop shows up.



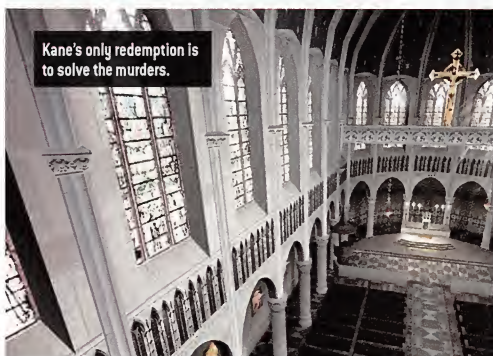
The lighting adds to the moody atmosphere.



Teach Tyler never to be late for work again.



Some of the film thriller references are blatant.



Kane's only redemption is to solve the murders.



The motion capture work is excellent throughout.



The falling temperature is linked to the murders.



As Carla, you spend a lot of time looking for clues.

NEW DIRECTION

Dialogue choices and every action in the game, bar walking, are controlled using the right analogue stick. And like throwing punches in *Fight Night*, most movements tend to mimic the real action. Opening Kane's eyes after he wakes is a quick move up and down on the stick to imitate blinking, whereas operating doors is a push to the left or right and then an arc upwards to simulate the bend of the elbow. Any available action once Kane is near enough to an object is indicated by a tiny picture of that object at the top of the screen accompanied by a demo of the correct analogue stick movement that you need to perform. Fail to complete the movement or do it too slow and the animation breaks off. It's best described as unfolding the animation and after a few goes becomes second nature.

And it's this control scheme that the game's success hinges on. For all the decisions you get to make, paths you can follow and repercussions for other controllable characters your choices cause, these small movements and actions seem to be as much as you actually get to sink your teeth into as a gamer. There are no puzzles as such and there's certainly no one to shoot, just your ability to move the right analogue stick as directed – sometimes within a time limit for a sense of extra urgency. It's interactive, yes, but is *Fahrenheit* really a game? And is it going to appeal to hardcore gamers? We have our doubts, even if the gameplay isn't as restrictive as the ancient *Dragon's Lair*.

ACTION AND REACTION

Even the game's ten or so major action sequences follow this pattern. To date there's a car chase, a one-on-one basketball shootout, ice-skating, a boxing match, a bizarre scene in a church where you're chased by statues of angels, an even more bizarre fight against giant bugs that's part of Kane's paranormal visions, and the obligatory *Matrix*-style finale with lots of spectacular fighting and flying atop a building. They all look great, but when all you're doing is reacting on cue with a push of the analogue stick or the press of a button, it leaves you feeling like more of a passenger on a theme park ride than an active participant in what's going on all around you.

There should always be a place for games like *Fahrenheit*; games in which the story is the most important aspect, and where your character's actions have consequences. We can't recall many other games that do the same. This might come at a price though, and that price could be a game that's too gentle to really satisfy. Not with regards to its gruesome subject matter, but in terms of you not really doing anything more substantial than wiggling the analogue stick in the nick of time at specific points. Hopefully things will become clearer once the action sequences and consequences of your choices are revealed within a wider context.

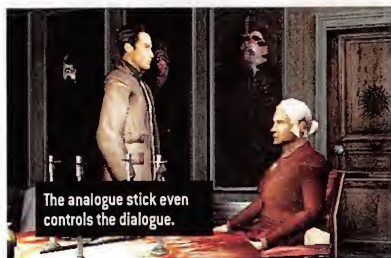
FIRST OPINIONS

We really want this game to work. It's professionally put together, especially the writing and directing, and each character's actions really do have consequences. *Fahrenheit* is billed as an 'interactive thriller', but whether it's interactive enough remains to be seen. Fingers crossed.

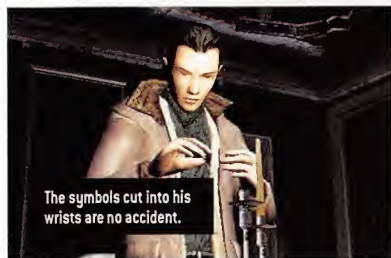
/ JONATHAN TODD

WHAT THE MAKERS SAY

"WE GOT VERY POSITIVE FEEDBACK FOR OMIKRON REGARDING THE CHARACTERS THAT YOU COULD CONTROL – IT FELT LIKE YOU WERE A PART OF THEIR LIVES. WE'VE TRIED TO GIVE EACH CHARACTER IN FAHRENHEIT A REAL CONTEXT TOO."



The analogue stick even controls the dialogue.



The symbols cut into his wrists are no accident.



She probably saw the murders 100 years ago.



Wash up in the toilet before leaving the diner.



Work up a sweat before sparring with Tyler.

"IT'S INTERACTIVE, YES. BUT IS *FAHRENHEIT* REALLY A GAME? WILL IT APPEAL TO HARDCORE GAMERS?"

PRIME SUSPECT

An introduction to *Fahrenheit's* three main players.



LUCAS KANE

Kane is haunted by strange visions of a girl asking for help and eventually gains paranormal powers such as the ability to hear people's thoughts and the gift of foresight. The increasingly cold weather is also linked in some way to the murder he committed.



CARLA VALENTI

Once the story moves away from a straightforward serial killer yarn to something more esoteric, Inspector Valenti teams up with Kane to solve the mysterious ritualistic murders. Her story arc is all about finding evidence, clues and witnesses and being a good cop.



TYLER MILES

Valenti's rookie team-mate agent has problems with his wife and even with getting to work on time. In one scene he needs waking by Valenti when she's under your control at the police station. In the boxing action sequence you can choose to play as either Valenti or Miles.



They can collaborate even while separated.



Every action uses exactly the same simple interface.

> IN A TIGHT SPOT

You'll be able to speed down tight alleyways on motorcycles to help shake off pursu-
tants.



“THE IDEA IS TO GIVE LONDON MORE CHARACTER THAN THE ORIGINAL GAME.”

THE GETAWAY 2

Better graphics! More characters! More London! Less Mockney!
Has *The Getaway* developer learned from past mistakes? We think so.

> GENRE	ACTION ADVENTURE
> DEVELOPER	STUDIO SOHO
> PUBLISHER	SONY
> OUT	SEPTEMBER
> ONLINE	NO

YOU'VE GOT TO ADMIRE SONY'S COURAGE.

They pumped somewhere in the region of £5m into *The Getaway* and, well... how can we put this delicately? Let's just say that it wasn't particularly great. And now, at the risk of throwing good money after bad, they're at it again. Like we said, that takes some courage.

While the first *Getaway* might have recouped Sony's investment, it's hardly a PS2 classic. Sony's London Studio has a number of questions to answer before many will buy into this sequel. It's all very well mapping out London, but can it put a decent game around it? Can it produce a fun, enjoyable, driving experience? Can it improve the risible on-foot missions? All of these questions will be answered with the release of *The Getaway 2* this Christmas.

At the moment, London Studio remains reluctant to discuss the development process or its work so far. But take a look at the screens on these pages. What do you see? More specifically, what don't you see? So far, the only action we've seen from the game is in the re-tooled mission segments, so there's no sign of any London landmarks, no city street scenes at all, and not much in the way of cars either. So, what else can we tell you? Well, quite a lot actually.

MORE DETAIL, MORE CARS AND BIKES!

A new graphics engine has been put together capable of displaying far more detail and this should result in a rich new layer of detail that improves greatly on the rather spartan streets of the original. Additionally, many of the smaller streets and alleyways that were removed from the game, but present in the original London, will make their way into the new game. The idea is to give London more character and more vibrancy than the original *Getaway*, and of course to dispel any lingering, cynical ideas that gamers may have that London Studio is merely dusting off the old game and giving it a cursory lick of new paint. Let's hope that this new, powerful graphics technology eradicates the appalling jerkiness the original game suffered from.

It's not just the London streets that are set to benefit from a new look – the cars and people are all being treated to an extra lashing of detail and realism too. Drawing inspiration from the likes of *Gran Turismo* and *Project Gotham Racing* cars will now feature super-realistic reflections and life-like crash damage. Additionally, just like the forthcoming *Driv3r*, every vehicle in the game includes a working suspension system, designed to make the driving experience look and feel far more like driving a real car. The old *Getaway* cars will look decidedly Lego-like compared to the new vehicles.

The Getaway 2 will also see motorcycles making their way into the game for the first time. Just like the cars, they're all officially licensed as well. Whether the developer will include some of the cool bike-based gameplay additions that *Vice City* offered remains to be seen, but what we can tell you is that the advanced physics in the new game will allow you to pull off some cool wheelies and proper jumps. The bikes will also play their part in the missions too, allowing you to gain an advantage by weaving between traffic when fleeing from police cars. Also, you'll be able to use the narrow alleyways to aid your escape by squeezing through gaps larger vehicles will be unable to pass through.

THE GETAWAY 2 FACT!

> LICK OF PAINT

Popular London landmarks will be overhauled and made more realistic. So real, you can almost smell the piss.

> ON YOUR BIKE

Fearsome 900cc monsters will rip up the city and make a mockery of mortal speed limits.

> BLEEDIN' HELL

Less guns but more fisticuffs – the complete opposite of real-life inner city London!

> HEAVYWEIGHT

Play as rough ex-boxer Mitch, who's descended from a long line of pikeys to become a rich City boy.

THIS TIME WE'LL GET IT RIGHT...

How Sony's London Studio will improve on the original.



THE ON-FOOT BITS

What was wrong? Unresponsive movement, dire weapons targeting, oh, and leaning up against a wall to get your energy back? How will they get it right? *The Getaway 2's* on-foot sections have been totally re-programmed, with a superior control method and a new auto-targeting system. What about the leaning on walls? Not in the new game. Apparently you need to find an 'appropriate' place to heal up and lick your wounds. A hospital maybe?



THE LONDON CITYSCAPE

One of the best things about the first game? Indeed, despite being a little lacking in detail and possessing some bad jerk-o-vision moments, *The Getaway* did a great job of capturing a massive chunk of London. How are they improving it then? The new graphics technology means a greater level of detail, plus narrow alleys are being added. Any unconfirmed rumours? There's talk of working sections of the London subway being added to the game, which sounds good.



THE DRIVING BITS

What was wrong with this? To be fair, the driving sections in the original *Getaway* weren't terrible, but London Studio wants to improve all areas of the game. Like how? By including a far more realistic physics engine to improve the handling of the cars for starters. Motorcycles like Ducatis and even Harley Davidsons will also be included. Do you think they'll deliver? Quite possibly, although we've only seen a handful of shots so far, which isn't encouraging.



Backstreets and alleys provide escape routes.



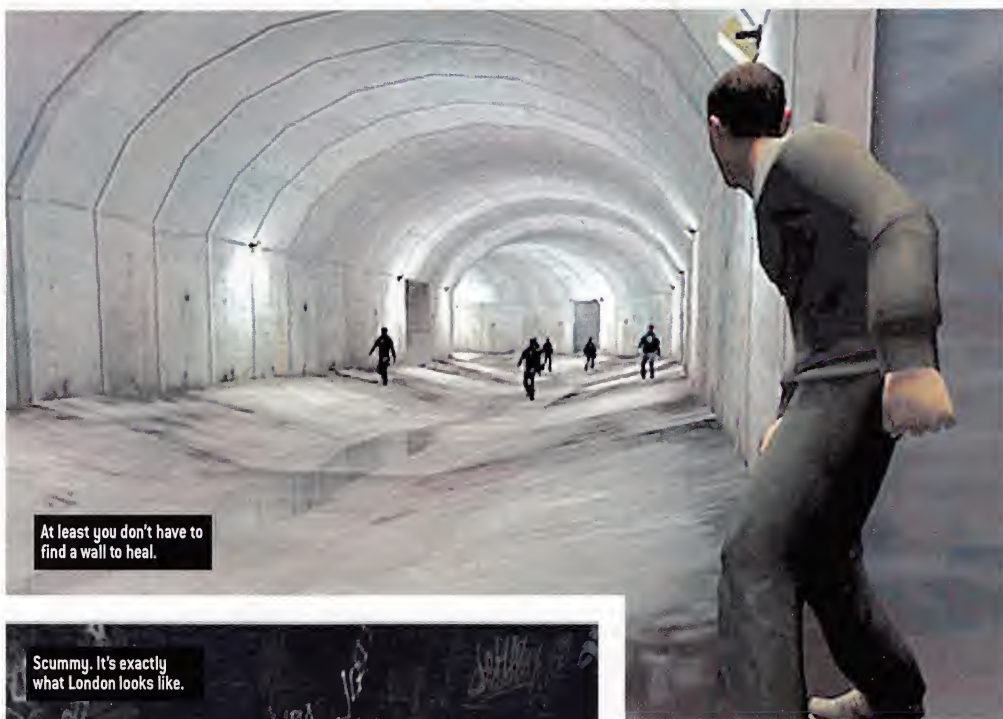
Pray that the new auto-targeting works here.



It's all in a day's work for the boys in blue.



Shoot first and you'll avoid the questions later.



At least you don't have to find a wall to heal.



Scummy. It's exactly what London looks like.



Mitch's missions are of the shoot 'em up variety.

SEQUEL SHOCK FACTORS

Will the sequel sport more media baiting elements?



GORE

Despite a few gory images in the screenshots released to date, developer London Studio is keen to point out that there are actually less bloodthirsty deaths in the new game than in the original *Getaway*.

BODY COUNT

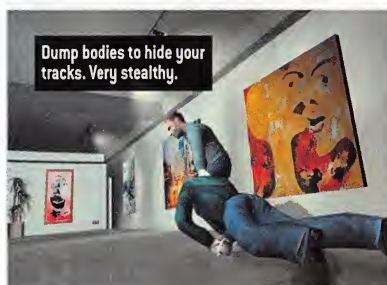
Although heroic cop 'Mitch' uses death-dealing machine guns to get his own way, bruiser Eddie prefers to stick to his tried and tested fists in order to get the job done. This introduces a larger degree of variety to the gameplay, cuts the death toll, but doesn't compromise the action.

SWEARING

The first *Getaway* was notorious for its conspicuous overuse of the F-word which seemed to be mostly for shock value alone, and sounded almost comical in places. The news is that this game will be just as foul-mouthed as its predecessor, but hopefully a little more serious and less patronising.



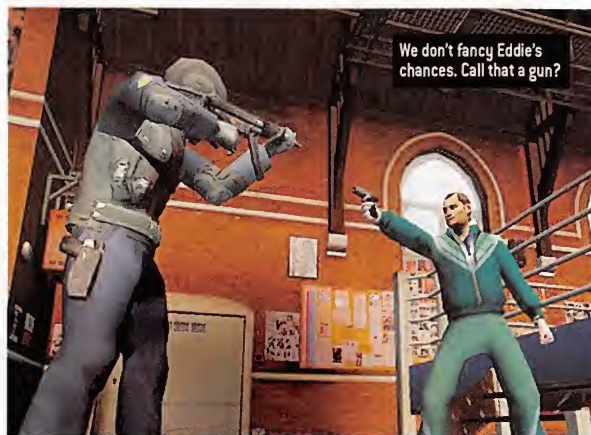
More creeping around - let's hope it's fun.



Dump bodies to hide your tracks. Very stealthy.



Aiming's improved, for better gunfighting.



We don't fancy Eddie's chances. Call that a gun?



Plenty of places to hide on a building site.



A typical rush hour scene at Redfern station.

"THE GETAWAY 2 IS AN ALL-OR-NOTHING PROJECT FOR SONY."



A Renault 5 - hardly the stuff of classic chases.

THE ALL-NEW STUFF

Despite its sequel status, London Studio is keen to stress that this really is a whole new game and not just a mission pack update — so although the game is set in the same underground world as the *Getaway*, this time you have to control a whole new batch of characters. That being the case, Sony has elected not to use the same voice talent as in the original game, bringing in some new blood to liven up the proceedings — hopefully dismissing the dire 'mockney' utterings that helped make the original *Getaway* more chucklesome than sinister. The developer is also using the likenesses and body language of the actors to produce the most realistic performances it can, even going as far as hiring a casting agent to ensure a certain level of quality.

Bearing the above in mind, perhaps the biggest shock is that the main protagonist of *The Getaway* — Mark Hammond — has been allowed to live happily ever after, with the action shifting to new boys Mitch and Eddie. Mitch is a flak-jacketed, machine-gun wielding cop-on-the-edge, while Eddie is a thinly disguised Irish version of Terry McCann from the classic *Minder* series. Although London Studio has yet to comment, there's also a strong rumour that there will be a third playable character in the game — probably female. Each character will boast individual characteristics, plus their own specific strengths and weaknesses. While Mitch can easily despatch the bad guys with assorted gunplay, Eddie tends to rely more on his fists, introducing more of a beat 'em up element to the gameplay. All of these shady characters will operate in the same shadowy East End underworld seen in the original *Getaway*.

GETTING IT RIGHT

The Getaway 2 is an all-or-nothing project for Sony's London Studio. The first game showed huge potential, but turned out to be a bit of a turkey in its execution. Although it scored 7/10 in *PSW* at the time, it would struggle to get a 6 if it were released today.

The mammoth task of accurately recreating London has already been done, so now it's time for it to build on that and improve the gameplay. The new physics engine and improved detail levels should sort out the driving sections of the game (Studio Soho also claims to have sorted out the dodgy arrow which takes you to your mission objective) but it's the on-foot missions that need the most work. From the screenshots, you can see that the graphical side of things has received a much-needed boost, but the developer is spending most of its time concentrating on the gameplay.

A new auto-targeting feature has been included to make the shoot-outs more instinctive, and perhaps most importantly, a far more flexible control method is promised too. Fingers crossed.

FIRST OPINIONS

We wanted to like *The Getaway*. We really did. So we're not so worried about the new elements, which we're pretty sure will be great. We just want the original material to be polished so that it works a lot better this time. All the pieces are ready. They just have to be put together in the right way. We're giving you a second chance, son...

/ RICHARD LEADBETTER

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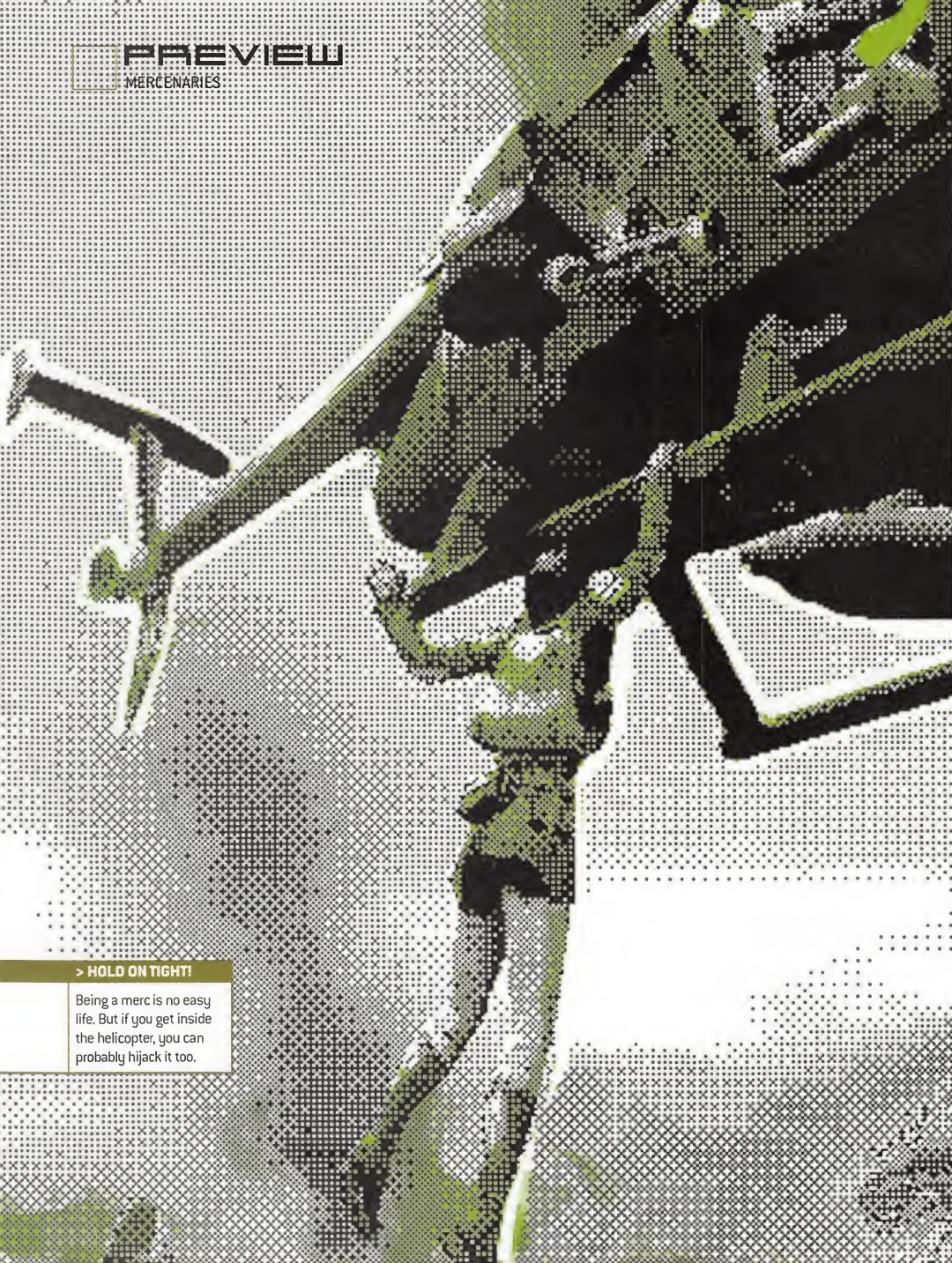
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> HOLD ON TIGHT!

Being a merc is no easy life. But if you get inside the helicopter, you can probably hijack it too.

“YOU CAN GO ANYWHERE, STEAL ANY VEHICLE AND BLOW ANYTHING UP.”

MERCENARIES

Grand Theft Auto meets *Halo* round the back of the bike sheds for an almighty tussle. It's war without rules, and it's all about to kick off!

> GENRE	ACTION ADVENTURE
> DEVELOPER	PANDEMIC
> PUBLISHER	ACTIVISION
> OUT	SEPTEMBER
> ONLINE	NO

THE SHELVES ARE SAGGING WITH HUNDREDS

of games all competing for your cash. We're here to steer you towards the best ones, and to help you avoid the stinkers. We like to think that we get it right enough of the time for you to trust us when we say we've been shown a game that may well be worth laying down some dosh on.

Mercenaries is a massively ambitious title. It's almost impossible to believe that it runs on the PS2 at all, such is the lofty scale and breadth of its aspirations. But it does – we've seen it, and it looks brilliant. Set in the near future in a highly unstable post-coup North Korea, you play the part of a mercenary sent in by a private military company to flush out any remaining loyalists before they can launch a nuclear strike. Playing much like *GTA*, you're free to go wherever you please within the huge, open levels. You can steal any vehicle, be it a Humvee, a car, a tank, an APC or even a helicopter gunship. You can destroy anything, from vehicles to roadblocks to huge office blocks. Why, you can even blow massive holes in the ground should you want to.

But war is never simple and the North Koreans are but one of four factions battling it out to gain overall control of the destabilised country; the other three being the UN peacekeeping forces, China and the Russian Mafia. The clever thing about the game is that these factions will respond to you in a different way depending on how you treat them. Initially, the UN is your ally – you're the good guys and so the UN will support you in your actions, fighting alongside you, and allowing you access to their vast intelligence network and fearsome air support. If you start shooting at their men or try to steal their helicopters though, you'll soon go down in their estimation. Remember when you were playing *GTA* and you thought, "Wouldn't it be great if I could play these gangs off against each other and then decide for myself who to side with?" Well, that's exactly what *Mercenaries* lets you do. You want to be a hero? Fine, you do that. You want to be an evil criminal mastermind? Sure, you can do that too.

THE ACE OF SPADES

Then there's the 'Deck of 52'. Taking its cue from the recent Iraq conflict, there are 52 members of the overturned North Korean government the UN wants to capture and bring to trial for atrocities committed during their administration. Finding them is a case of persuading one of the four factions to supply you with intelligence by completing missions for them. Once you know where they are though, it's up to you how you deal with them. If you want to claim the big money, you'll have to capture them alive. But if you just want the UN to flatten the whole area with a massive air strike, no one is going to stop you, and you'll still win.

We like this title because it delivers on what it promises. Alongside *Burnout 3* and *Driv3r*, it's one to put straight to the top of your wish lists.

FIRST OPINION

Mercenaries is going to be something very special indeed. It takes the best elements from the *GTA* series and builds on them, situating the whole experience in a well-executed realisation of freeform warfare. Get really excited about this game. No, we insist.

/ MARK SORRELL



MERCENARIES FACT!

> PLANES, TRAINS AND TANKS

You'll be able to take control of over 20 vehicles including cars, tanks, planes and helicopters.

> MASTER OF DISASTER

To cause further destruction there are construction cranes you can knock over in any direction you choose.

> THE A-TEAM

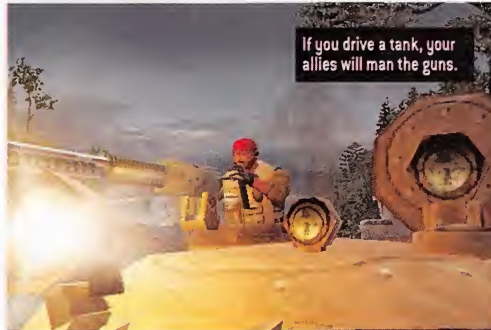
There are three characters to choose from: an American bloke, a Swedish guy and... a foxy British chick.

> SOLDIER OF WAR-TUNES

The music will be provided by Micheal Giacchino – especially when the *Alias* soundtrack.



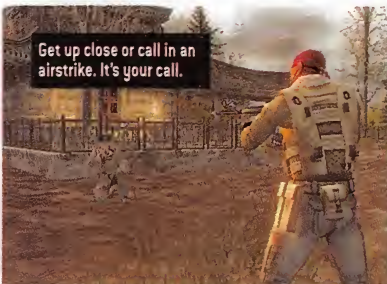
The British girl is the quick and stealthy one.



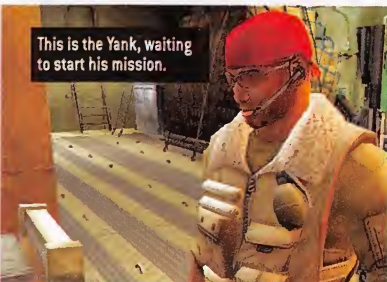
If you drive a tank, your allies will man the guns.



You can man destructive howitzers like this one.



Get up close or call in an airstrike. It's your call.



This is the Yank, waiting to start his mission.



Some of the battles are truly epic in scale.



The massive explosions are a joy to behold.



Enemies will work with intelligence to kill you.



TANK JACKING

Perform a little grand theft auto on the battlefield.

Stealing vehicles is a little more involved than just walking up them and pressing the Triangle button – especially when the occupants don't want to let you in.



1/ To steal a tank, you must first be lined up under the gun barrel before...



2/ ...grabbing the barrel and then shimmying down it to get onto the tank itself so you can...



3/ ...open the hatch and drop a grenade in. Messy, but the tank's all yours now.





> VAN THE MAN

Armed to the teeth with tools of the trade, Van Helsing isn't in any way scared of the dark.

"HELISING RELIES ON BUZZSAW BLADES ATTACHED TO HIS WRISTS."

VAN HELSING

The vampire-buster appears to have been in training with *Devil May Cry*'s Dante as he branches out to fight a roster of classic creatures.

> GENRE	ACTION ADVENTURE
> DEVELOPER	SAFFIRE STUDIOS
> PUBLISHER	VIVENDI
> OUT	MAY
> ONLINE	NO

VAN HELSING – THE LEGENDARY VAMPIRE

slayer and monster hunter from Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula* – has decided to widen his remit and take on all that the underworld can throw at him. That includes The Wolf Man, Frankenstein's Monster and just about every creature to have emerged from Universal Studios in the last 75 years. The summer blockbuster could be the most inspired monster film ever made, or the dumbest idea since vintage comedy duo Abbott and Costello tried a similar trick back in the 1940s. With Hugh Jackman cast as Van the Man we remain hopeful, but with the director of the vacuous *The Mummy* and *The Mummy Returns* at the helm we're not entirely convinced either.

Although similar to the film in substance, the game takes a different approach. The famous monsters only turn up for end-of-level boss encounters as Van Helsing makes his way across Europe in search of all that is evil. Dr Jekyll's hirsute alter-ego Mr Hyde is the first celebrity monster he'll face, but *Dracula* doesn't appear until the final showdown in his Transylvanian castle. For the most part Helsing must battle against an array of zombies, skeletons and stone gargoyles in a combat style that's reminiscent of *Devil May Cry* and, more recently, *Castlevania*.

To help him along Helsing has access to nine types of melee and ranged weapons, including a scimitar, a crossbow, a hand-cranked Gatling gun, a not-very-19th-century 'lightning' gun and an unlockable 'elephant' gun that kills enemies with one shot. However, for the most part Helsing relies on the buzzsaw blades attached to his wrists, and his trusty grappling hook.

FIRST-CLASS HOOKER

This multi-purpose hook comes in handy for avoiding attacks – something Helsing excels at. He can soar away from enemies, grapple onto higher platforms to continue progress through a level and also use it to solve simple puzzles, like hauling down structures to form makeshift bridges with. Like *Devil May Cry*'s lead character Dante, Helsing is unbelievably agile and is rarely a double jump or nifty roll and cartwheel away from escaping danger. The game isn't geared towards avoiding fights, but there's occasional subtlety to the combat. This is in direct contrast to the breathless bashing of buttons you'll need to master in the later levels.

It all looks highly polished and very slick – certainly a lot better than most of the movie to video game efforts we're forced to endure. Sure, there's little here that hasn't already been done to death before; the moves, combos, weapons and enemies are really just novel variations on those found in countless other third-person action adventure games. And there are the usual niggles with the camera that need to be ironed out when it moves from its normal fixed position to swinging around the action. Yet there's something really appealing about dusting these classic monsters in their own backyard as a bona fide vampire hunter. See for yourself by watching the exclusive trailer on this month's DVD.

FIRST OPINIONS

Van Helsing won't win any awards for originality, but it's good to see a third-person action game that looks like honing its features until they're razor-sharp before release.

/ JONATHAN TODD





VAN HELSING

FACT!

> UNLUCKY FOR SOME

The 13 missions take place across France, London and Transylvania — home to Frankenstein and Dracula.

> ON THE SET

Developer Saffire has worked closely with the movie's production team to recreate key moments and battles.

> HISTORY LESSON

The game will flesh out Van Helsing's mythology by including a backstory not seen in the movie.

> CLAIM YOUR REWARD

There are over 20 unlockables to discover if you complete the game on all three difficulty levels.

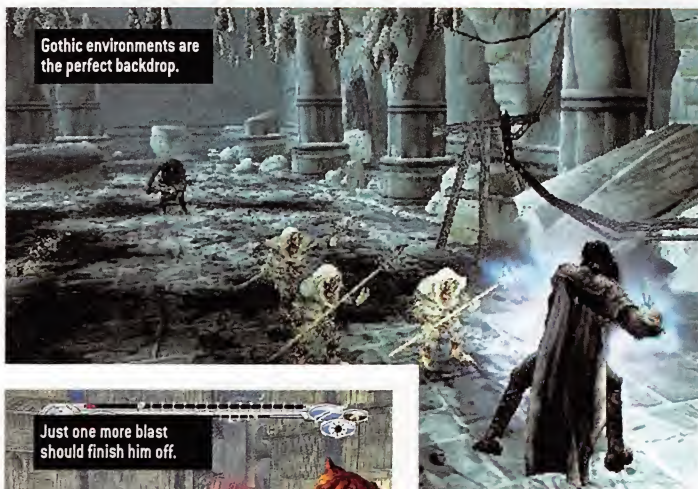


Acrobatically dodge enemies who gang up.



VELKAN

When he opens wide, it's time to pull the trigger.



Gothic environments are the perfect backdrop.



Ranged weapons outnumber melee ones.



Just one more blast should finish him off.



Frankenstein's Monster even has its own castle.



Don't be taken in by Drac's ladies of the night.

DID SOMEBODY SAY SEQUEL?

Distinguished absentees we'd like to see in the inevitable follow-up.



THE MUMMY

Boss Potential: Can bring the dead back to life and unleash plagues of fireballs. His inclusion would call for a level to be set in Egypt too, opening the way for a boss-fight atop an ancient pyramid.



THE INVISIBLE MAN

Boss Potential: The insane scientist would be able to stay invisible for short periods of time. Hitting him while visible would nullify his power for a few extra seconds, allowing Helsing a critical strike.



BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN

Boss Potential: The carnal partner of Frankenstein's Monster could team up with the big guy himself, with the only way to kill her being to systematically hack off her stitched-on body parts.



> THE EYES DON'T LIE

Meet Maya Antares: chief sorcerer of the URRS, and a green-eyed Russian fox.

“OLD SCHOOL GAMEPLAY MARRIED TO STATE-OF-THE-ART GRAPHICS.”

THE RED STAR

You'll need military muscle and magical might in equal measure to defeat the armies of *The Red Star*.

> GENRE	SHOOTING
> DEVELOPER	ACCLAIM
> PUBLISHER	ACCLAIM
> OUT	AUGUST
> ONLINE	NO

THE RED STAR IS A REFRESHING OLD SCHOOL

game with a refreshingly old school ethic. Based on the American comic book series of the same name, *The Red Star* is a reimagining of modern day Russia. Known in this twisted comic book universe as the URRS, Russia is presented as a huge military power with vast amounts of powerful technology at its disposal. Magic also plays a huge part, with sorcerers adding their mystical strength to Russia's military might. They can make tank armour light enough for use by soldiers, or teleport an entire army in one go.

The crowning glory of the URRS is the Red Fleet. It's an armada of floating battleships that are known as Sky Furnaces, on account of them being held aloft by the power of magic. It's on one of these ships that the adventure begins. The first level is set aboard the flagship of the Red Army's flotilla as it's attacked by another gigantic Sky Furnace craft.

There are three playable characters to choose from. Maya Antares is the sorceress general of the Red Army and it's her search for her missing husband, Marcus, that underpins the game's plot. Presumed dead in a war some 10 years earlier, news of his possible survival is brought to her by Norwegian rebel Makita. With Makita and her bodyguard Kyuzo in tow, the three set off to rescue Marcus and bring down the empire. Pretty standard stuff then. Except for the massive floating battleships that are suspended in mid-air by magic, of course.

Of the available characters, Kyuzo is the bruiser of the group, with powerful attacks but who's also slow and cumbersome. Makita's the speedy but weak one, while Maya is the powerful magic user, who ensures the game has all the traditional bases covered.

The Red Star is a mix of classic old school mechanics, with the emphasis placed firmly on jittery firing action and some high-speed fisticuffs to boot. It's both a side-scrolling shooter and a fighter at the same time, where characters come equipped with both melee and ranged weapons. Larger enemies pump out an obscene number of bullets in repetitive geometric patterns in much the same way as an end-of-level boss might, challenging the player to learn their intricacies and avoid their fire.

Enemies can be locked on to, allowing the player to track them, and attacks can be combo'd together. For instance, Kyuzo can impale an enemy and then beat them against the ground. Then there are the special attacks, known in *The Red Star* universe as 'Protokol' attacks. These are affected by your choice of weapons and your choice of character, as well as your partner in two-player mode. Combining your attacks with the second player is one of the more effective ways of causing lots of damage quickly.

So, determinedly old school gameplay married to state of the art graphics it is then. We'll be giving you all the news on this interesting title in the months to follow.

FIRST OPINION

We don't expect anything completely new from *The Red Star* but that's not necessarily a bad thing. Providing a modern-looking yet resolutely old school game experience is the main selling point here, and judging from this evidence, it should achieve just that.

/ MARK SORRELL



THE RED STAR FACT!

> TRILOGY

The *Red Star* is based upon a comic book of the same name, which is now onto its third series.

> ARMS DEALER

Players can purchase new weapons between levels depending on their ranking for earlier levels.

> DOUBLE TEAM

You are able to combine attacks to great effect, which also extends the longevity of the game.

> IF YOU LIKE THAT

Old School shooting game *Psyvaria* is an inspiration for *The Red Star* - it's just had a sequel released in Japan.



These robots are about to undergo 'Hammer Time.'



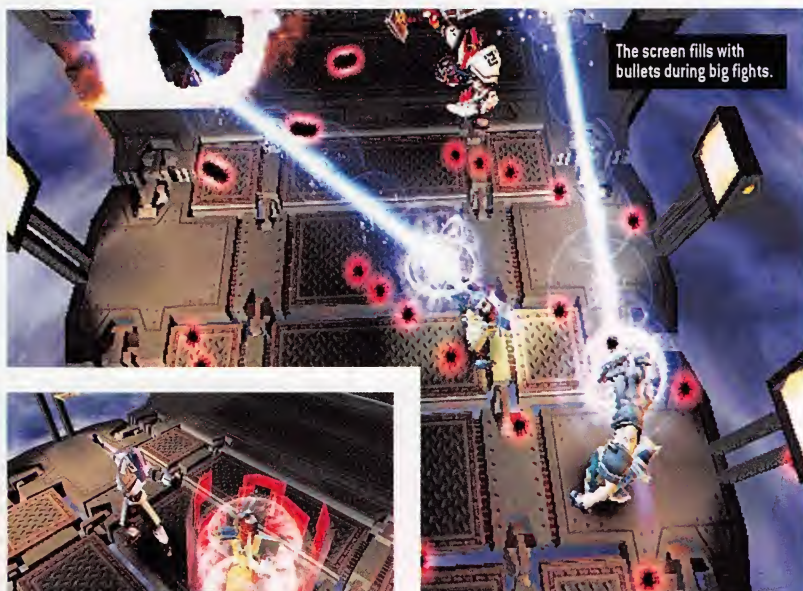
Two players can make huge attacks together.



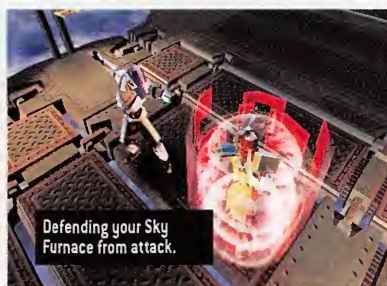
You have some immense guns at your disposal...



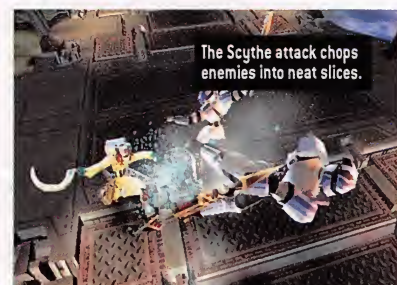
Even with so much going on *Red Star* still looks beautiful.



The screen fills with bullets during big fights.



Defending your Sky Furnace from attack.



The Scythe attack chops enemies into neat slices.



The hammer attacks look immensely damaging.

BY THE BOOK

In the neverending search for licensed property, plenty of developers have turned to comics for inspiration.



JUDGE DREDD

A well-realised first-person shooter, with a suitably Dredd feel, let down by shoddy graphics and a few nasty bugs.



NINJA TURTLES

Beautiful but dull, repetitive and frustrating, this scrolling fighter is a poor comeback for the amphibian crime fighters.



XIII

Based on the Belgian graphic novels, *XIII* is a visually stunning and reasonably engaging first-person shooter.



100 BULLETS

Take on the part of Cole Burns and fill many, many men with lead in this stylish-looking action shooter.



> **FOUR TO THE FLOOR**

Insert delicious witty commentary on modern pop-culture here!



“DELIVERS A VAST ARRAY OF MUSIC CREATION TOOLS INTO YOUR HANDS.”

MTV MUSIC GENERATOR 3

If you want to make your own music rather than sing someone else's, *MTV Music Generator 3* could help you to become a legend in your own bedroom.

> GENRE	MUSIC
> DEVELOPER	CODEMASTERS
> PUBLISHER	CODEMASTERS
> OUT	JUNE
> ONLINE	NO

ARE YOU BORED OF HAVING TO REPEATEDLY

blast endless legions of soldiers, monsters and giant space bugs? Are you tired of merely guiding a ball about a pitch, a car around a track or a sword-wielding adventurer around a dungeon? Would you like to do something a bit different with your PS2? Perhaps you might like to lay down some fierce beats, throbbing bass lines and spaced-out sound effects instead?

With *MTV Music Generator 3* you can now take your first faltering steps towards becoming a world-renowned super-producer. The basic idea is to cram the full functionality of a professional music studio inside the confines of your console. This is quite a tall order since making computer music usually involves the use of a sampler to play back sampled sounds, a sample editor to edit and effect these samples, a synthesiser to create synthesised sounds and a sequencer to arrange these sounds into a song. In the real world this all takes up significantly more power than is afforded by a humble PS2.

Previous versions of *MTV Music Generator* lacked usability. Sure, they were capable enough but were also difficult to use. For example, the PS2 pad has never been able to recreate the smooth 'point and click' action of a mouse that conventional PC sequencers always use. Earlier *Music Generator* software did try and mimic mouse control and it ended up being fairly confusing and laborious.

BIG FISH, LITTLE FISH, CARDBOARD BOX

With this in mind *MTV Music Generator 3* has been redesigned from the ground up. The result is a piece of kit that boasts a vast array of powerful music creation tools that are easy to use right from the get-go.

Remix mode lets you start mucking around with music instantly. There's a selection of tracks to pick from, including ditties from Carl Cox and Krafty Kuts. Within a minute, you're messing about with the beats and the vocals, setting the effects and restructuring the arrangement.

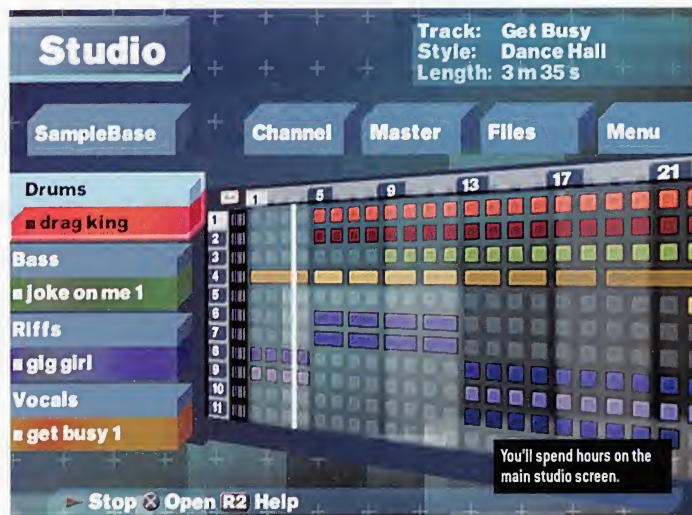
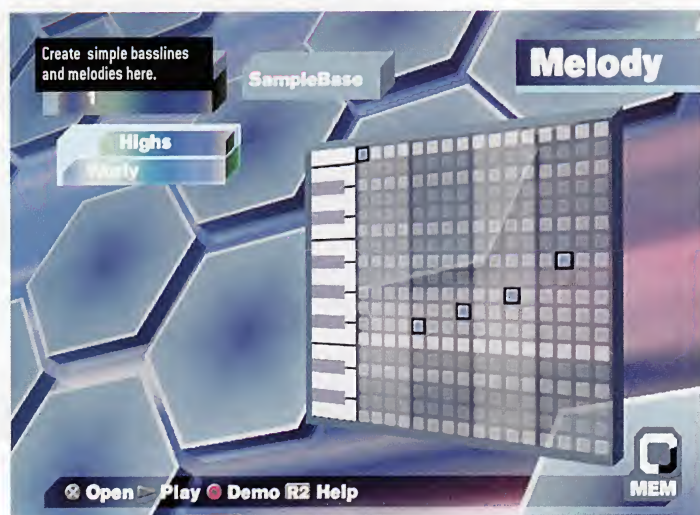
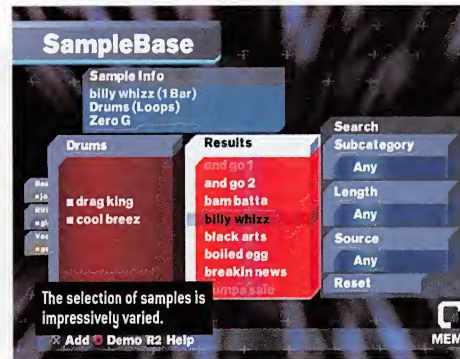
MTV Music Generator 3 is an impressive tool that lets you make some genuinely creative and high quality tunes quickly and easily. The controller has been properly integrated from the beginning, rather than acting as an apologetic mouse substitute. There are limits to your creativity – aside from some sampling abilities, you're limited to the sounds and effects included on the disc. Luckily, these are reasonably powerful and customisable.

In terms of control, this is looking like a huge change of gear for the series and a step up for console-based sequencers in general. It'll never match the power, quality or flexibility of a PC-based set up of course, but then again, specialist tools like this cost significantly more than either a PS2 or *MTV Music Generator 3*. Keep it PSW and we'll bring you a full review just as soon as we've composed our first Number One hit.

FIRST OPINION

Seems to be a flexible, powerful and useable tool. Looks like an attractive option for anyone who wants to have a go at making some tunes, and a great introduction to music making in general. With a selection of well-judged licensed tracks this is shaping up to be a lot of fun.

//MARK SORRELL



BARE BLAZIN!

PSW's guide to some of the lucky artists whose tunes you'll be mashing up.



OUTKAST

"The Way U Move" — Hip Hop

Deep bass? Wimpy.
Lady killer? Smooch, not bump and grind.
Bangin'? Not in any way.
Bogle? Lightweight waist winding.



SEAN PAUL

"Get Busy" — Dancehall

Deep bass? Big for a pop tune.
Lady killer? They're all dancing.
Bangin'? Fat steppy beat.
Bogle? None more bogle.



SNOOP DOGG

"From The Chuuch To Da Palace" — Rap

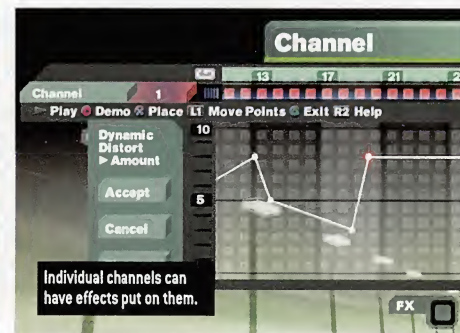
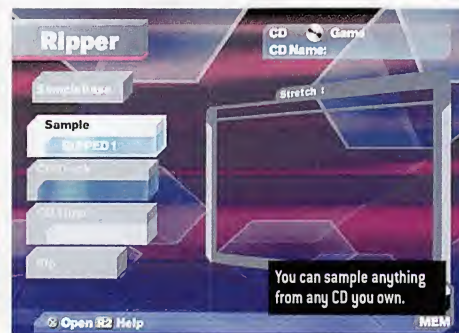
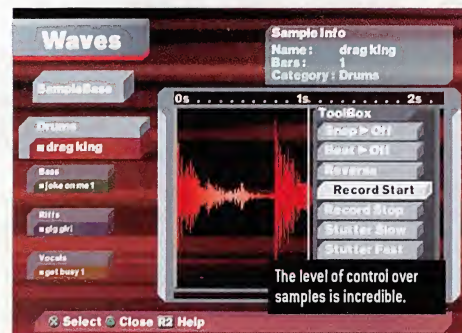
Deep bass? Bigger than space.
Lady killer? Stripped to bra and panties.
Bangin'? Too laid back for all that.
Bogle? Serious booty shaking.



DJ MARKY

"LK" — Drum & Bass

Deep bass? Huge like the ocean.
Lady killer? Some dancing.
Bangin'? Totally, utterly bangin'.
Bogle? Limited wiggling. More stomping.



MTV MUSIC GENERATOR 3 FACT!

> GOT THE STYLES

Genres represented include Dancehall, Rap, Hard House Breaks and Garage. No Death Metal though.

> EMINEM VS THE WOMBLES.

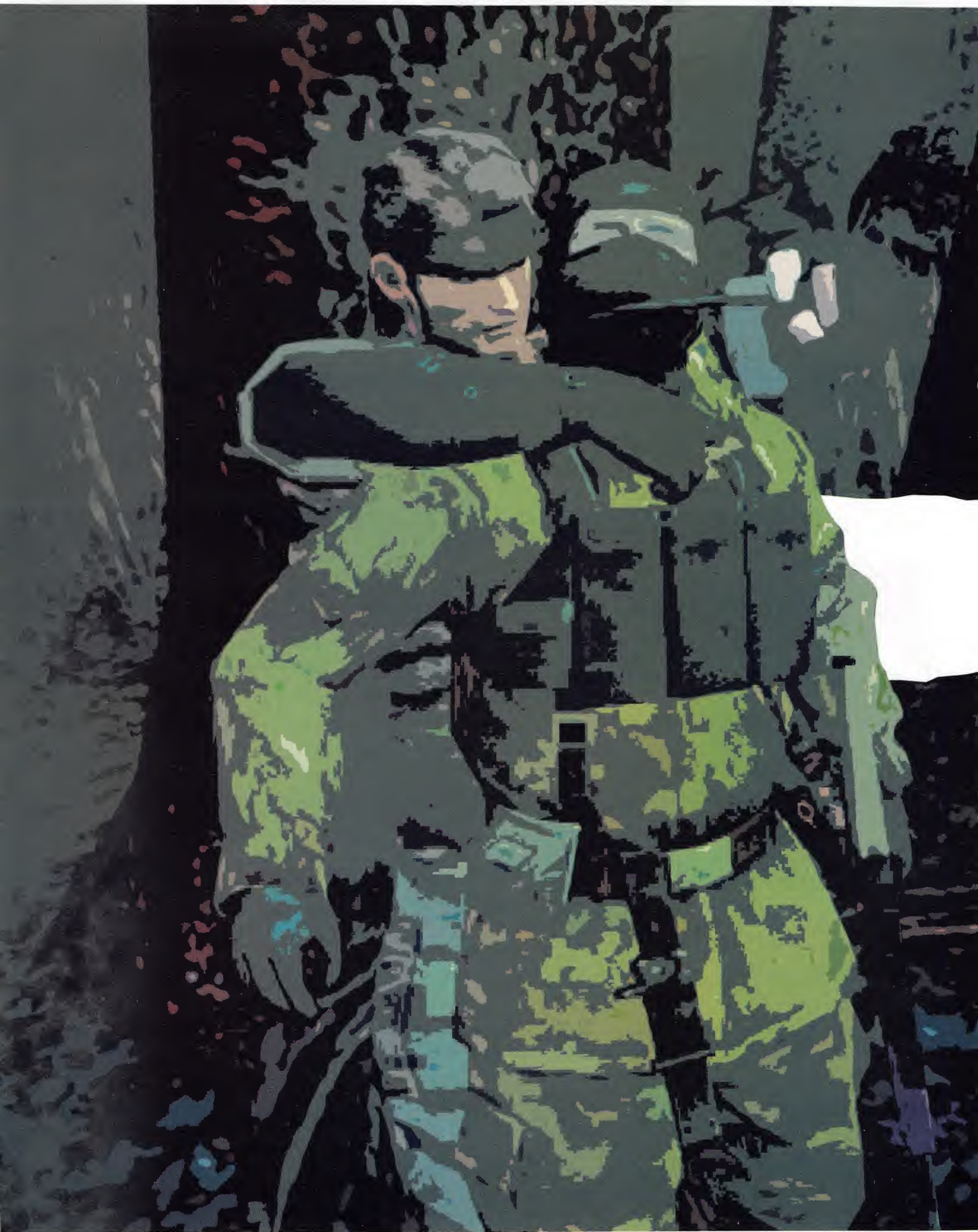
You can sample from any CD you own, which allows for all kinds of mad musical mash-ups.

> MY MTV

When you've completed your track, MTV Music Generator 3 can create a video for it on the fly.

> REEEEEEMIIIIIX

The remix mode lets you change tracks as they play, so you can drop fresh dance-floor breaks.





> GENRE	ACTION
> DEVELOPER	KONAMI
> PUBLISHER	KONAMI
> OUT	2005
> ONLINE	NO

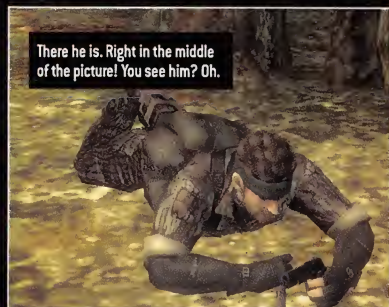
METAL GEAR SOLID 3

We have *all* the information you need on *Metal Gear Solid 3*. PSW exclusively brings you new shots, gameplay details and secrets before anyone else!

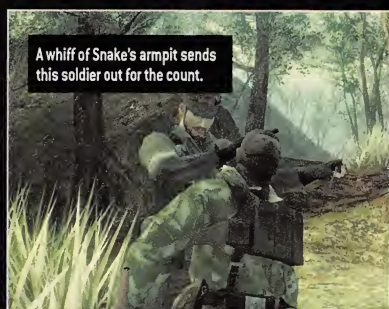
IF YOU COULD BE ONE PERSON IN ALL OF RECORDED HISTORY, WHO would you be? We'd be Solid Snake. Now, we're fully aware of how shallow and immature that sounds. We know he doesn't, in any meaningful sense, exist at all. But we'd swap all the back-rubs, fast cars and money in the world for the chance to crawl down corridors with a dodgy mullet, trying to avoid men who'd happily shoot us in the ribs, if only they could see us. Solid Snake is special you see. He's the distillation of action movie heroism and gaming greatness – the perfect marriage of Eastern cool and Western attitude. He's like no other hero in games or out of them, and he has the most fanatical fan following too.

Remember PlayStation's last big hero, Lara Croft? Things had already got very saggy for her by her third game, and we're not talking about those famous funbags, either. In contrast, *Metal Gear* creator Hideo Kojima has thrown out the rulebook and totally reinvented the tactical espionage action genre; the one he came up with in the first place. The new *Metal Gear Solid* is no longer set in the 'day after tomorrow' near future – everything points to the new game taking place in the Sixties. Instead of being plunged into an enemy base, Snake's out in the jungle. So much has changed since previous games, it's enough to throw you off the scent. But we've uncovered a wealth of detail about the new game, and it's all here for you to draw your own conclusions with.

Sit tight, because we've got lots of new facts to throw at you and we'd hate for you to miss anything. This is the snake shiznit.



There he is. Right in the middle of the picture! You see him? Oh.



A whiff of Snake's armpit sends this soldier out for the count.



You can't see it, but Snake has a hostage here. Nasty, nasty man.

WHO'S THE BOSS?

Let's start at the start (*Brilliant idea! - Ed*). The whole concept behind *Metal Gear Solid* has been blown apart. At least two thirds of the game will be set in the wilderness of mountain paths, dingy swamps and treacherous jungle. With no corridors to run down, no rooms to hide in, and nothing to muffle the sound of gunshot, there's no obvious way to avoid enemies. Guards now routinely search every area, rather than simply following the same old pattern. If you're thinking of staying put behind a tree, forget it. That's the old way of thinking. You're going to need something that allows you to see, and yet not be seen. Invisibility suits are the stuff of science fiction – even in the *Metal Gear* universe of the sixties. No, you're going to need something a lot more wily and amazing. You're going to need... makeup.

Well, face paint to be precise. And different coloured clothes. As we reported last month, one major aspect of outdoor gameplay is Snake's ability to disguise himself. Not as an enemy guard, but as the bark of a

tree or the gently waving grass. Painting your face and dressing up might sound like an annoyingly vague way to avoid enemies, but nothing could be further from the truth. It's been rendered extremely precise by a little feature called the camouflage gauge. In the top right hand corner of the screen a percentage number will be displayed, showing the likelihood of you staying hidden. Crouching or lying down will increase the number, as will staying perfectly still. But trawling on the slap and donning an appropriately coloured costume will really give you some hiding skills.

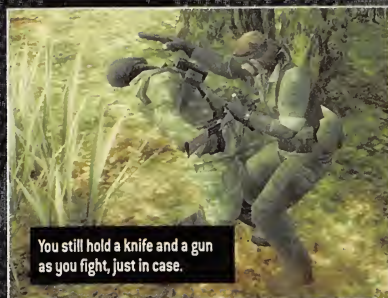
So if you crouch on the waving grass, you might get a 25% chance of being overlooked. Lie down, and you might increase it to, say 50%. But don a grass-hued ensemble and disguise your face as a fern and stay very, very quiet, and you might get it much nearer 100%. Any enemies who approach will think you're a small patch of foliage. Just be sure you don't hide in their path, or you'll end up getting accidentally stomped in the groin by a band of heavy troopers. And we defy even Snake to keep his mouth shut then.

You'll have several different costumes to begin with, but you can pick up

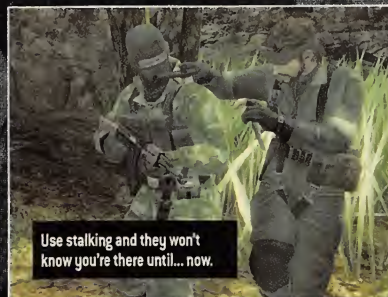
SNAKE MOVES #1

This sensational sequence shows how Snake can take down three enemies all at once.





You still hold a knife and a gun as you fight, just in case.



Use stalking and they won't know you're there until... now.



Fighting gun in-hand means you can instantly cover an enemy.



"Close Quarters Combat is a real, honest-to-God actual professional method of killing people."

more as you progress. Some costumes will give other advantages too, like protecting you from fire or cold. And if you're online with the network adapter, you'll be able to download new costumes to try out in the game. That is, as long as they're sensible enough to make it work without the PlayStation2 hard drive, which is a cumbersome piece of kit at best. Don't bet on that happening, sports fans.

FIGHTING TO SURVIVE

Previous *Metal Gear Solid* games have concentrated on the hide and seek aspects of the gameplay at the expense of flashy combat. Although Snake could handle himself in a fight, the games didn't exactly go out of their way to make it easy to kill enemies. The reason for this is clear. The games are all about avoiding detection, not doing your best Duke Nukem impression.

So it comes as something of a surprise to find Konami going out of its way to give Snake ninja fighting skills for this one. It's a whole new system called Close Quarters Combat, and it's already looking great. But as all these stunning sequences show, we're hardly talking flying kicks and tiger uppercuts here. Close Quarters Combat is a real, honest-to-God actual

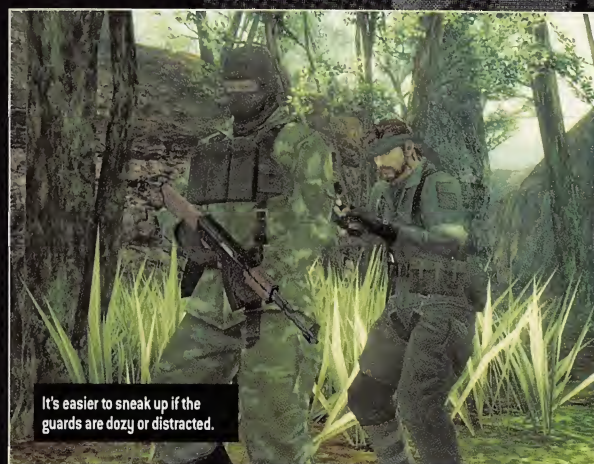
professional method of killing people. It's low-key, quick and dirty. It's so no-nonsense it makes that wild Hong Kong style kung-fu fighting look like linedancing. It's the sort of thing we'd expect Snake to know. See the Up Close and Personal panel for more details of what we mean.

SURVIVING TO FIGHT

Switching the arena to the jungle doesn't just mean that the art team have started modelling trees instead of computer terminals. The outdoors locations are going to change the very fundamentals of the game. Now that Snake is on his own without any of that posh, unlikely nanotechnology he usually relies on, he has to fend for himself. Which means hunting. Fail to eat and you'll take a massive hit in all your abilities. Forego food altogether and you'll eventually die of hunger. Stamina is the key here, with strenuous activity using up Snake's oomph.

Take stalking, for example. Snake can now track down enemies with added stealth, by adopting a special stalking posture and taking extra care as he approaches unaware guards. Walk up to them normally, and the >





snapping of twigs will give away your presence. Sounds like a great addition to the gameplay armoury, doesn't it? But even stalking enemies will decrease Snake's stamina, leaving him sluggish and disorientated if he's not had a good meal. Fortunately, Snake can eat all sorts of creatures. In fact, any wandering wildlife is, quite literally, fair game. He can chow down on birds, frogs, scorpions, fish, and even alligators. We don't mean he cuts off a nice juicy gator steak to grill on a barbeque. Being the super hard-ass that he is, Snake has no qualms about chewing on raw flesh. [Obviously, it helps if you're a video game character too. No taste, no gut-destroying microbes, no lingering sense of shame.] Nor will Snake be confined to fleshy feasts. If you're not feeling up to tracking and killing an alligator, you can always snack on a tasty mushroom to keep your energy levels up. If all else fails, you can loot food from enemy encampments. But remember that you're as likely to be hurt while hunting as you are from stealing, thanks to poisonous snakes and scorpions. Still, at least you can pick up deadly animals and throw them at enemies to distract them.

Staying well fed isn't enough though. You'll also need to keep an eye on

the thermometer. If Snake's body temperature drops too low, he'll suffer. In fact, Kojima has expressed his amazement that nobody seems interested in this chunk of gameplay. Because it's going to be crucial to survival to stay at the right temperature, and that includes not getting overheated as well. If you remember the early shots of Snake surrounded by burning wreckage, you'll understand that there are times when he's in danger of literally burning up. You'll be able to take off Snake's shirt to cool down, but if you do this in the icier sections of the game you'll literally freeze to death. It's bound to provide some fascinating new moments to savour in the game. When you add in the potential for downloadable camo suits, you'll see that changing your wardrobe is going to be the next big thing in games. Hell, if the girls of *Final Fantasy X-2* can do it, why not Snake?

A WALK IN THE WOODS

What's getting a bit lost in all this talk of fighting and eating is the look of the game. Take a look at the shots again, and see how the trees continue into the distance. The light that filters through the branches is an amazing thing on its own. It's that amazing translucent, greenish wash of moving patterns you only see in the deepest of forests.

And then there's the incredible detail, too. Every single blade of grass

SNAKE MOVES #2

Another amazing sequence from Snake's new combat repertoire.



MEET THE MAKER

Metal Gear creator Hideo Kojima's words of infinite wisdom. Listen up!



>> Has *Metal Gear Solid 3* taken much inspiration from US or UK games? Western video game designers, they're the ones with the interesting technologies. And they are artistic. But sometimes, because they are so artistic, they forget what games should feel like, that games need to feel right and they need to play well. It's like serving food in a restaurant. You need to be sensitive to the paying customer. You need to be nice and providing service.

>> Did you have any real experience of the survival aspects? The biggest thing we did is that we went on a one-night trip with Mr. Mori, our military advisor, into the mountains. He gave us training, right into the night. We wore camo gear, we did our stalking, we practiced walking techniques. At midnight, we had guards in front of our own cottages, with exercises like 'Team A attacks Team B' around midnight and such. We'll be doing this more often. There were three teams – my team survived, but the other ones got killed [laughs].

>> Will we still be able to drag bodies around wherever we like? Dead bodies can be hidden in the grass, streams, rivers, and logs. And yes, Snake can carry bodies.

>> How does changing outfits work? Can we do it whenever we like? Snake changes outfits in real-time, and he will pick up additional outfits as he progresses. There will be fire and snow camo outfits in the game. We took out a few camo ideas that we originally had. There will be no bloody camo, and Snake will not take sword wounds.

>> How clever are the enemies? Enemies are very aware of visual and aural cues, but they cannot stalk or hide. These guys have artificial intelligence that's totally different from what went before in the first two games. When they spot you, they won't be calling for more help. Those four guys will be working together as a team, trying to get you. However, bosses can use stalking behaviour and they can utilize the environment to hide from Snake.

>> You've mentioned the wilderness rather than just the jungle. Are there mountainous or desert environments in the game too? There are no deserts in the game. There are rocky hills and slopes that have very little grass on them, and they might seem empty, but there are no deserts.

>> Do you think you've reached the limits of what you can do with *Metal Gear Solid* now? As game technology advances, eventually what we shall see is digital stuff that is so real that you actually believe you are touching it. But no matter how realistic the images ever become, the player will still know that he is just seeing a bunch of numbers. No matter how realistic you can make game graphics, they are not real. An explosion that looks realistic is not a real explosion.

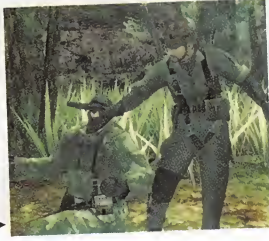
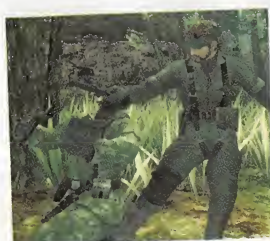


The guard swore he'd never go hunting in a national park again.

"Birds, fish, scorpions, frogs, alligators — any wandering wildlife is, literally, fair game."

flattens when you walk across it... and then slowly stands up again if left alone. Every tree is individual, some allowing Snake to climb up and hide in their branches while others lie fallen and mossy on the ground, perfect for ambushing the enemy. This is nothing like the stark metallic hues of *Metal Gear Solid 2*. The game hasn't even been built using programming code from the earlier title, either. They went right back to the drawing board and came up with a completely new way of displaying the graphics, just so they could fit more detail and expansiveness into Snake's normally grey and clinical world.

Sneak himself has been partially motion captured by combat genius Motosada Mori, and David Hayter returns to fill in that familiar voice. If this really is Solid Snake, of course... Leaked voiceover scripts confirm that the game is set, at least partially, in the sixties. A piece of in-game dialogue between US President Lyndon B Johnson and USSR premier



WORK IN PROGRESS

Actual sketches from the *Metal Gear Solid 3* storyboards – you saw 'em here first!



"It's that magic ingredient of a truly immersive world."

Khrushchev talks about some kind of battle weapon: "The 'Davy Crockett' atomic battle group delivery system was completed two years ago. But serious problems were found with the system's range and precision and, although they were mass-produced, they've never been deployed in battle." Oddly enough, the Davy Crockett was a real Cold War weapon, nothing other than the world's smallest nuclear rocket launcher. Prime fodder for a *Metal Gear Solid* story, then, given that the actual *Metal Gear* robots all have nuclear capacity. There's also a gag about the seminal David Bowie song *Space Oddity*, thanks to a character called Major Tom who remotely communicates with Snake. Hmm.

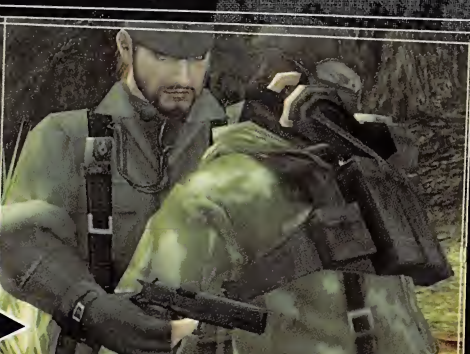
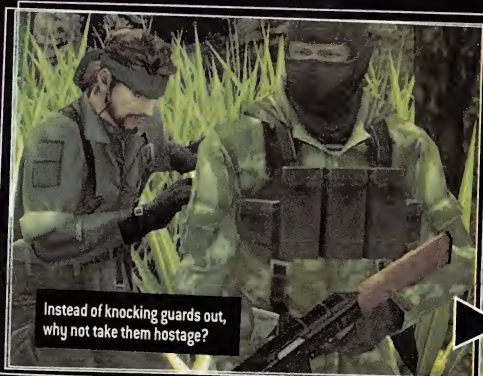
In another excerpt, the classic *Metal Gear Solid* villain Revolver Ocelot says he has twelve bullets now, presumably meaning he has two pistols instead of one. But he also refers to two previous defeats. Could these be the encounters in the previous games, meaning that there's even more time-warping skulduggery than we previously thought? Anyway, this surely can't be the Solid Snake we know and love because he's an adult in

the 'present day' of the other games. However, Solid Snake has a nemesis called Big Boss, who's Snake's father and genetic double thanks to some funky cloning technology. So, surely, this must be Big Boss, right? Konami has been dropping cunning clues all over the place implying that it is in fact Big Boss, but they're keeping very tight-lipped about the whole thing. We know that Big Boss only has one eye, but we also know (or think we know) that he lost it in the 80s, a long time after this game is set. We now know that the Snake you play as has both eyes, except... look at the storyboard sketches up there on the left. Go on, we'll wait. If you look closely, the grizzled old guy with the eyepatch looks a lot like Solid Snake, gone old. Which means he's almost definitely Big Boss. Except... who knows?

THE WHOLE STORY

Don't think this is the last word on the game from PSW, either. So much remains to be seen. Not just story, characters and locations. Mainly, how *Metal Gear Solid 3* is going to feel. In the end, Kojima's vision of his games is firstly about gameplay, sure, but secondly about the texture of the thing. Sure, looks are important, but it's that magic ingredient of a truly immersive world that keeps us coming back.

In the middle of the night, as we're tossing and turning and clutching our fluffy Otacon doll we bought back from Japan, our worst nightmares





He barely has to move to take out the unsuspecting guard.



Fight with the least amount of fuss, or you'll start trouble.



about *Metal Gear Solid 3* are this: they'll muck up the whole hiding thing. The percentage-based, suit-changing gameplay that Kojima has planned will fall flat. There'll be no fun to be had hiding from guards, because it will all be a matter of choosing the right set of pants and sitting still. That's not our only fear. What if the Close Quarters Combat system will make it too easy to bring down guards with the press of a button? And perhaps the whole survival aspect of the game will turn out to be simply lame. We'll end up spending our whole time spearing fish when we should be stalking soldiers. We'll end up naked and shivering in the jungle instead of dealing death to nuclear robots. Well, it's possible.

Or – and we all know this one is much more likely – it'll be too short. Just as you're mastering the complex survival mechanics, just as you've collected enough camo suits to start a car boot sale, you're out of the jungle. Cue a couple of hours of by-the-numbers base infiltration, a ridiculously nasty end boss, and the inevitable two and a half hour ending cut scene which will explain precisely nothing. In fact, we'd put good money on *Metal Gear Solid 3* being shorter than we'd like. Because we'd like it to run for tens of hours, *Final Fantasy* style, and we know that it won't. Every scene, every moment of gameplay will be well-nigh perfect, but that has to mean that it will be on the short side. And since we don't want the boys at Konami to spend an extra year filling it out, we're kind of fine with that. So cross your fingers, rub your lucky rabbit's foot, eat a mouthful of four-leafed clover and pray to the gods that it's every bit as good as it could be. We have faith in you, Mr Kojima. Don't let us down.

/JOFF BROWN

UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

How the all-new combat system works.



Is Close Quarters Combat a martial art, a fighting philosophy, a set of scare tactics or a new game mode? In fact, it's a little bit of all of those. Essentially, Kojima and the *Metal Gear* team became dissatisfied with the way Snake fought enemies. It became clear early on in development of *Metal Gear Solid 3* that Snake was going to need a better way to fight in the great outdoors, where one pistol shot can be heard for miles. And being sticklers for heightened realism, they brought in an expert called Motosada Mori.



The Close Quarters Combat system, or CQC for short, was created with the help of the ex-SWAT instructor. He's the fella in the white top. Yes, he may look like he'd struggle to fight off the attacks of a wet hanky, but in real combat, he'd rip your arms off before you even knew he was there. He's perfected a real-life system of hand-to-hand combat that has been taught to police forces and special ops teams around the world. It's a series of techniques to take out multiple enemies without having to use weapons in open environments.



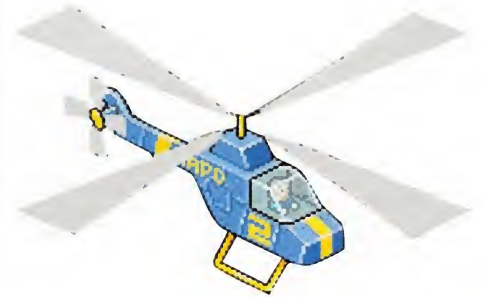
And it's the way Snake will fight in *Metal Gear Solid 3*. As you can see, it differs from traditional martial arts in several ways. Firstly, it mostly relies on keeping a gun and a knife in each hand, thus making sure that you're ready to kill instantly as well as taking out enemies that are further away. It's also completely no-nonsense, with Snake using the bare minimum of time and movement to dispatch each guard. Thanks to this, it's also incredibly quiet. Perfect for the world's stealthiest agent, then. We're very impressed.





IF WE RULED GTA: SAN ANDREAS

10 things we'd put into *GTA: San Andreas* if we were in charge. Which we're not, obviously. So don't expect to see many/any of our ideas in the finished game. Except for maybe the giraffes...



#1 GANG WARS

Given that *San Andreas* is a West Coast city, we'd like to see a big Triad presence. Add in some South American drug lords and some mad pipe-hittin' gang-bangers like the real-life Bloods and Crips. Most of all, we want full scale gang warfare with police in riot gear, revenge killings and whole blocks taken up with massive riots. Yes, we know the role of gangs in the earlier games, but we want the chance to actually alter the balance of power in *San Andreas*, not just get shot.



#2 MORE VEHICLES

Quad bikes. Segways. Monster trucks. Skateboards. Bicycles. Don't get us started on the number of new vehicles we absolutely have to see in *San Andreas*. Even rollerskates, for when short sprints just aren't fast enough to escape the long arm of the law. Hold on, why not go the whole hog and get some surfable surfboards? After all, *San Andreas* is located next to the ocean. Then we could have turf wars in the surf. Did someone just say pogo stick, or was that just our inner demons? That'd be absolute genius too. No, it would. Shut up.

#3 TRAMS

Trams are wicked. They're like a kind of disabled cross between a bus and a train, and they figure prominently in the iconography of *San Andreas'* nearest real life counterpart San Francisco. In our dreamlike, honey-coated imaginary version of *San Andreas*, almost every mission involves either riding a tram out of its predestined limits with destructive results, or ramming a moving vehicle into a tram, also with destructive results. Either way, it's all about the exploding trams.

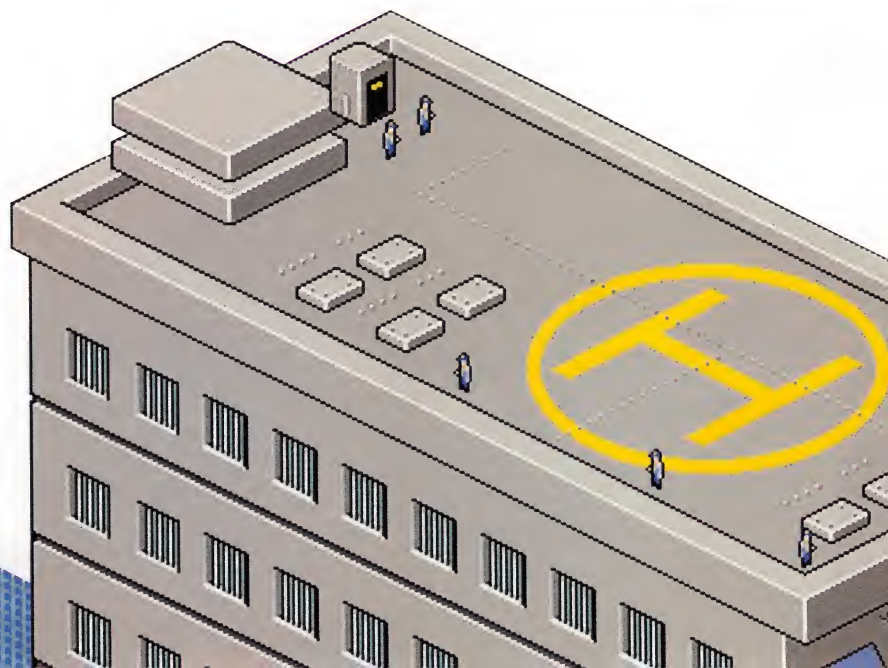


#4 ANIMALS

We started by thinking small: police sniffer dogs, horses for traffic cops. Then we had a cup of strong coffee and started getting a bit mental. Imagine if *San Andreas* had a zoo. Come on. That would be the absolute best thing ever. A bear strapped with explosives wandering round the city. Rampaging giraffes, hippos in the sewers. A rampage that had you killing 30 penguins in two minutes! Brilliant. Make it happen, *GTA* people. You've still got a few months, how hard can it be to create a zoo? Really hard? Oh.

#5 ALCATRAZ

If you've ever seen the quality slice of action schlock *The Rock*, you'll realise the potential for empty penitentiary-based blasting that *San Andreas'* answer to Alcatraz would provide. Gunfights in a prison. Locking coppers in cells. What if you had to hold Alcatraz from a police invasion, using a rocket launcher to fire at incoming ships and choppers? That'd make our day.



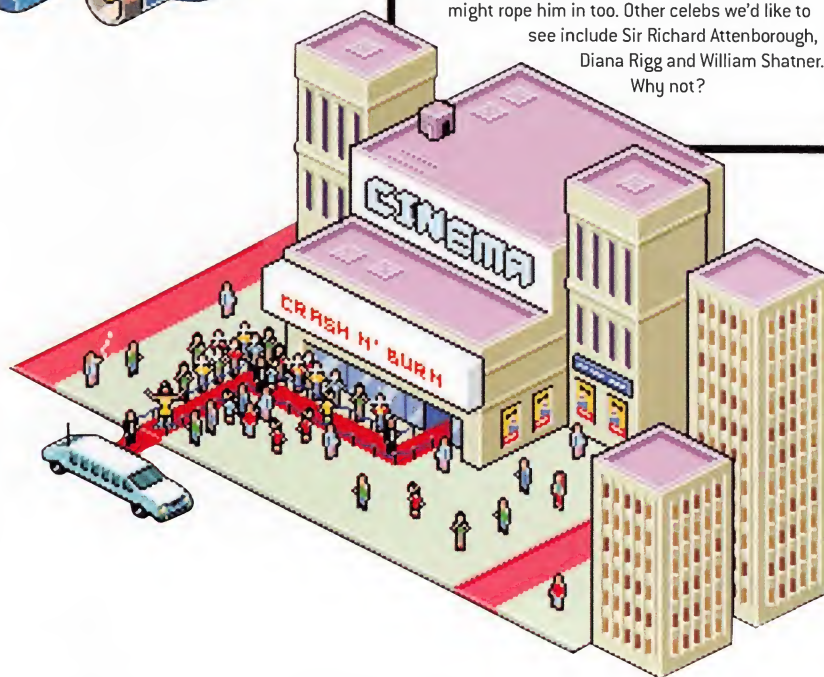
#6 PROPER PLANES

Considering we only got a handful of helicopters and one measly seaplane to play with in *Vice City*, it's high time we got a bit more aerial action. We'd like a Lear jet in an airfield that we can actually use to get away from it all if things get a bit too hot in the city, while being able to commandeer a 747 and take our mates with us would also make us smile. Or how about an F111 to bomb our criminal adversaries into the ground with? Failing that we want gyrocopters, jet packs and a hot air balloon – come on Rockstar!



#7 CELEBRITIES

We know for sure that 'Madchester' survivor Shaun Ryder has something to do with the new *GTA*. Leaked scripts indicate he's voicing a character, but we'd like to see him in there as himself. Rockstar also has the rights to some early 50 Cent tracks, meaning they might rope him in too. Other celebs we'd like to see include Sir Richard Attenborough, Diana Rigg and William Shatner. Why not?



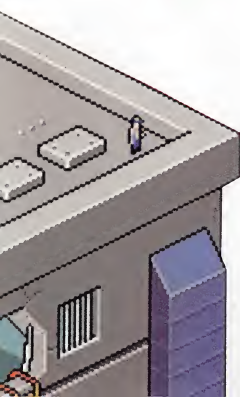
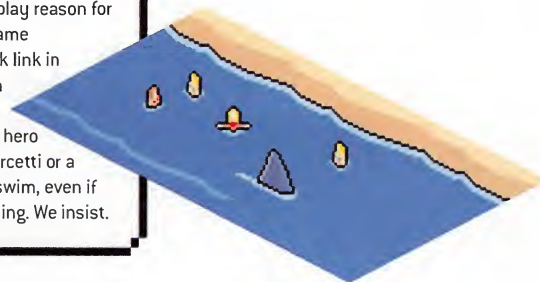
#8 TWO GUNS AT ONCE

The *Grand Theft Auto* series is famous for letting you do just what you like. What we like to do is to wield two guns at once, inevitably lowering our accuracy but pumping out twice as many bullets instead. Any new *GTA* hero worth his salt has to have the option of toting two semi-automatic weapons at once. Although to be truthful, we'd love to see a gun and samurai sword combination. Yes, we're disgustingly violent-minded. Yes, we're actively seeking help. [If watching old John Woo movies counts.]



#9 SWIMMING

Right, the whole being unable to swim fiasco has gone on long enough. There's no gameplay reason for not being able to swim, there's no in-game explanation provided, it's the only weak link in *GTA*'s chain. We're not asking for full-on scuba diving or the ability to get anywhere in a pair of speedos. But the hero of *San Andreas*, whether it's Tommy Vercetti or a crime newbie, simply *must* be able to swim, even if it's only for short periods before drowning. We insist.



#10 HIPPIES

Don't think Scooby and Shaggy so much as the Manson family. *San Andreas* being San Francisco in the same way that *Vice City* was Miami, it stands to reason we want to see a whole heap of misguided, hemp-fuelled gun violence as the '60s refugees lose it big time and start gunning down everyone in the name of peace, love and recycled toilet paper. Of course, if the entire game was set in the '60s, then they'd play an even bigger role, right? Pray it's true, for a Nixon-era *GTA* would be nothing short of genius.

GameCube

Xbox

PC

PlayStation 2

Game Boy Advance

Sonic

**YOUR GUIDE TO THE
FUTURE OF GAMING
AND BEYOND!**

HYPER»»

AUSTRALIA'S GAMING AUTHORITY

REVIEWS

ATTENTION! THIS SECTION CONTAINS EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO DECIDE WHAT TO BUY, AND WHAT TO LEAVE ALONE.



76 RED DEAD REVOLVER
Step into the dusty boots of a gun-slinging cowboy in Rockstar's latest action shooter.

PSW RATINGS

The PSW scoring system is designed to make your buying decisions simple. Here's how it works.

> 10/10	ESSENTIAL
> 9/10	BRILLIANT
> 8/10	RECOMMENDED
> 7/10	GREAT
> 6/10	DECENT
> 5/10	AVERAGE
> 4/10	POOR
> 3/10	VERY DISAPPOINTING
> 2/10	BLOODY RUBBISH
> 1/10	AVOID AT ALL COSTS

WE'RE BIG ON KILLING THIS MONTH. First up, we've got *Red Dead Revolver*. As you may know from seeing *Young Guns* and that awful movie starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Sharon Stone, the Wild West was primarily a place where people would go to gun each other down. *Red Dead* captures this spirit of brutal lawlessness perfectly and actually manages to make cowboys seem somewhat appealing in the process. That's the power of killing, I guess. What else could possibly make gruff men in silly hats seem anything less than ridiculous?

Following *Red Dead*, there's the extraordinarily gory *Hitman Contracts* and the sword-swinging, head-lobbing antics of *Way of the Samurai* and *Onimusha Blade Warriors*. More killing there. *Transformers*, conversely, isn't so much about killing as it is about repeatedly blowing up robots with weapons bigger than most houses. But, you know, it's killing in *spirit*.

Games that are not so much about killing but still contain killing in some places include *Fallout: Brotherhood of Steel* and *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*. *Gran Turismo 4: Prologue* contains no killing at all, but plenty of cars. Frankly, none of these games are very good. Hell, *Prologue* is barely a game at all. And do you know why? Not enough killing.

/ DANIEL STAINES



PSW GAME OF THE MONTH

The Game of the Month Award is what it is, the title that in PSW's opinion is the essential purchase of the month. Go and buy it. Now. Now!



PSW MUST BUY

Typically awarded to games that score 8/10 or above, representing one of the best in its genre. Simply, if you like this type of game, you 'must buy'. Clever eh?



080 Gran Turismo 4: Prologue



076 Transformers

NEW RELEASES

This is your first line of defense against the horrific fate of buying a game with a pretty, shiny cover, taking it home, unwrapping it and finding within ten minutes that it sucks harder than a big, yellow, industrial strength Hoover. With added vacuum capacity and handy brush attachment.

- 068 RED DEAD REVOLVER
- 072 HITMAN CONTRACTS
- 076 TRANSFORMERS
- 078 ONIMUSHA BLADE WARRIORS
- 080 GRAN TURISMO 4 PROLOGUE
- 082 WAY OF THE SAMURAI 2
- 084 TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES
- 086 FALLOUT BROTHERHOOD OF STEEL



Those gloves make you look like a waste-disposal worker, sport.



I wouldn't have a shoot-out at high noon in this dingy stinkhole. Look at it - it's bloody filthy!



Remember - it's "Cowboys and Native Americans" now.

RED DEAD REVOLVER

Let your Itchy Trigger Finger take a ride to Brimstone. Yeeeeeehaw!

> TYPE	ACTION
> PLAYERS	1-4
> OUT	NOW
> PUBLISHER	TAKE 2
> DEVELOPER	ROCKSTAR SAN DIEGO
> ONLINE	NO

WHAT IF? WHAT IF I WAS SNATCHED FROM my mother's hand as a toddler and taken far away to be a pirate in Caribbean waters? What if I was kidnapped as a young boy only to become the protégé of a lonely reclusive billionaire? Would my heritage be obvious? Would I retain anything of my old life? At the risk of melodrama, Red, the hero of Red Dead Revolver has travelled such a road when his family was murdered for their goldmine when he was just a boy. Now a grown man, bounty hunter Red has made his way to the



town of Brimstone to hunt down the One Armed Man who orphaned him.

At the risk of drawing a long bow, the game Red Dead Revolver has travelled a similar, if less dramatic road. This Wild West action shooter originated in Angel Studios, and was being produced for Capcom. Somewhere along the line the gargantuan movements of Big Business intervened. Angel Studios was bought by Rockstar, becoming Rockstar San Diego and Red Dead Revolver, in development limbo for some time, was picked up by Rockstar and revamped.

FROM CAPCOM TO ROCKSTAR

It seems like a great distance to travel from the Japanese gaming giant so prominent in arcades to the American publisher responsible for Grand Theft Auto 3. I expected to see whole portions of Red Dead Revolver stick out like two sore thumbs. There are the Chase the Train sections reminiscent of "on-rails" gun games like Namco's Time Crisis and a hammy third person fisticuffs stage. But for all my searching, the game maintains a focus on good third person gameplay

mechanics, occasionally requiring some sniper-style sharp shooting. Only a small portion of levels stray into novelty territory, and they're mostly to develop the Spaghetti Western theme.

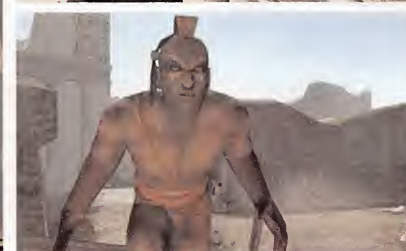
Red Dead Revolver is something of a melting pot of modern development trends. The most obvious source of inspiration is Max Payne. At the most superficial level, this is a third person action game using a Dual Shock Controller that sees a single brooding gunslinger duelling it out against scores of heavily armed Good-For-Nothings. There's also the eponymous hero, a moody outlaw with a permanently grimaced face and a heart filled with revenge for a lost family.

Just as Max Payne played to the John Woo film stereotype of the brooding loner out for revenge in a grimy city, Red Dead Revolver plays to the grand cinema tradition of the Spaghetti Western. It seems Rockstar's stock in trade is creating great engaging scenarios, even before the game begins. Those who weren't sucked into the 80's MTV film clip intro of greed and excess in Vice City were surely born in the 1990's. While Red Dead Revolver doesn't use big name voice acting or

LOVE GUNS, LOVE PECKINPAH



Why come up with a whole new style for a game when you can pinch the ideas of some film maker? Now we've all accused Max Payne of plagiarising the films of John Woo and The Matrix. But if it's guns, the west and the "bal-let of violence" then Rockstar are surely ripping off "The Wild Bunch" for "Red Dead Revolver". "The Wild Bunch" is the original cinematic orgy of ballistic depravity from 1969, directed by legendary right-wing director Sam Peckinpah. Along with "Bonnie and Clyde" (1967), "The Wild Bunch" broke new ground in blood thirst and public outrage against popular culture in the 1960s. Of course, anyone brought up on a diet of video games should snore through both of them...



licensed soundtracks, it captures the tone of this cinematic folklore effortlessly – and probably better than Vice City did with its style.

BONANZA

The big danger of reworking any game after the initial design phase is a loss of coherence. Once the foundations are laid, it's difficult to make a game something more than what it was intended to be. Happily, this is not the case with Red Dead Revolver. There's no evidence of any stopgap coding and when you're playing the game, this is a full-blooded, high-energy Rockstar action bonanza.

The controls are simple enough – movement to the Left Analog stick, camera to the Right stick, the triggers do most of the weapon work. Your inventory consists only of weapons that Red (or one of his cohorts) can wield. Health pick-ups come in the form of healing bottles that are dropped by slain enemies. It's a pretty lean operation in terms of abilities – you can pretty much just move around and shoot. So it's good that within the game world, there's a good

amount of interactivity and a range of ways to engage.

Basic combat has you holding L1 to Aim (maintaining direction) and using R1 to fire, often with thumbs wagging wildly to strafe around the enemy gang. Location-specific damage means that enemies react to where on their body they receive a bullet: they will dance if shot in the foot and contort differently depending on where they've actually been hit. A headshot is a good way to get a quick kill but not a one shot kill. Each kill registers as a kind of semi-transparent wave that surges back to Red from the target. Being a Quake railgun cheat from way back, I found it a little frustrating that tougher enemies can withstand multiple shots to the head before finally falling.

There are portions of the game when you can mount up to a steed, and ride around like a maniac with the default third person mode being how you aim and fire – making the difficult task of shooting even more cumbersome. The choice of weapons comes into play here – a big slow rifle that can hit all sides of a barn is what's

"A SINGLE BROODING GUNSLINGER DUELLING IT OUT AGAINST SCORES OF HEAVILY ARMED GOOD-FOR-NOTHINGS..."

required. But I ended up just jumping off so I could actually land a shot.

A good addition is the means to access a First Person perspective, very similar to a Time Crisis style of combat, as Red will frequently run into standoffs. Let's call it Taking Cover. By pressing Square when near to a wall or barricade, Red can put his back to it and prepare to take a shot. When you're ready to fire, move Red close to either edge of the wall and Aim. The camera now springs to a first person view of the possible target area, allowing you to target your hombre. After lining up your shot, taking a shot will cause Red to spring out and shoot, before ducking back to cover when L1 is released. It's a very coherent way to manage battle, since precise shooting in third person mode is notoriously difficult. It also manages to play to the strong Western atmosphere.

DON'T LOOK IN MY JOURNAL!

The more dollars you earn, the more weapons and items you can buy for the Story Mode and the more characters and arenas you can unlock for Showdown. There are some cheap and some expensive items that also add pages to the personal journal of Sheriff Bartlett of Brimstone. This provides backstory to the main players in the game and offers tantalizing hints of events to come. Purists would argue this is a pretty lazy way to create character but it does augment the cinematic cutscenes. The journal also holds your player percentages, play times and hit counts.

By the power of Grayskull!



Brimstone - where everyone has a rifle.

THE DEAD EYE OPENED

The last variety of combat is a third person melee mode, making use of punches, kicks, throws and, of course, beer bottles. This is a Western, so there had to be a bar brawl. Unfortunately this is the weakest part of the combat. Not only does the camera go bananas in some small areas, meaning your perception of the surroundings goes haywire, but the collision detection of hits and grapples is approximate in ways that the gunplay is certainly not. It's a nice change to gameplay I guess, but there's more than a little mashing about it and it lacks the polish of the gun battles.

The icing on the cake for the gunplay mechanics is the Dead Eye special ability. Triggered by R2. This feature puts Red into an adrenalin fuelled slow motion sequence. By passing the gun's crosshairs over multiple targets, Red can hit a string of bodily locations, either on a single enemy or many. Your Dead Eye metre is gradually filled Red takes out enemies and you can use the whole metre in one attempt, or use it block by block. There's a great amount of flexibility and this sense of control and power evokes the proto-masculine fantasies of The Wild Bunch (see boxout).

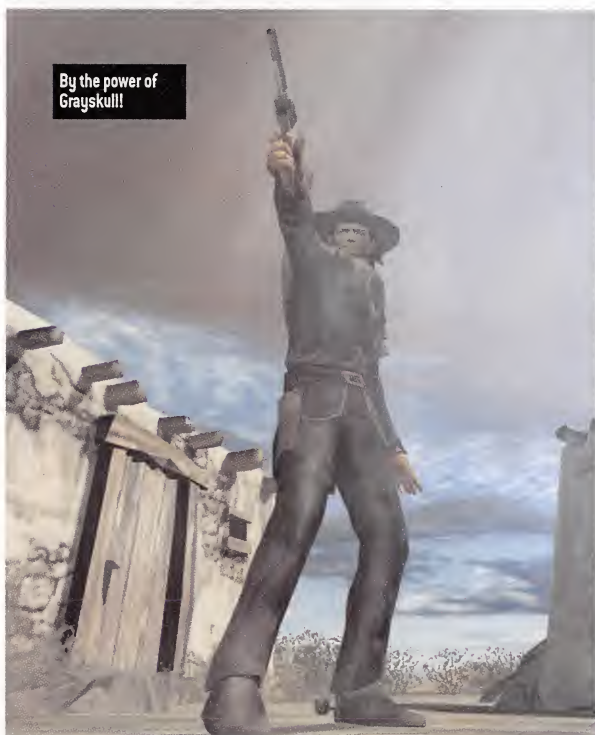
But back to the action shooting heritage. Red Dead Revolver is a game that features a point

system where Red accrues cold hard cash for all the bounties he collects. The concession to gameplay is the fact that the dollars are added up as the hits connect with your enemies, more dollars for headshots. Also if you manage to make their bodies dance a grim fandango with reams of bullets, Red's dollars multiply thanks to the "combo". It's an excellent play device that gives you a tangible measure of your skill but as far as authenticity goes, the absurdity of a "combo" system equaling dollars is truly joyful.

As the Story Mode progresses you play as many different characters from the Wild West town of Brimstone. They each have different characteristics, the most obvious being their unique Dead Eye abilities. The dual pistol wielding English dandy Jack Swift, for example, automatically locks onto a swag of targets and punishes them all while Annie Stoakes has a Dead Eye ability that unleashes a furious rifle blast.

HIGH NOON DUELS TO THE DEATH

The High Noon duel battles that emerge in the Story mode and feature in Showdown (the multiplayer mode) are a marvel. In a High Noon stand-off, two opponents must draw their weapons and shoot the other. The fun is in the execution (so to speak...). To draw your weapon,





"THERE'S ENOUGH DEEP RED IN THESE DESERTS TO SOFTEN THE HEART OF THE GRUMPIEST ACTION GAME CYNIC"

you must pull the right analog stick back and then push it forward to aim. A wavering crosshair of your pistol passes over the opponent's body and you must wrestle with the crosshair's drunken swaying and stop your enemy by unleashing rounds on different parts of his body. All of this happens in about five seconds and it's a great test of nerve. The number of times I've drawn an empty hand at an enemy! It's a great mini-game compliment to Red Dead Revolver.

The other multiplayer modes are variations on familiar games. In Bounty Hunter, a set value in bounty dollars must be reached to win, so it's down to the best and fastest shots. While in Sundown, there's a longer time limit, so it's down to the most kills and still highest bounty. There are only three modes although there's a fair range of customizing options.

Sundown and Bounty Hunter multiplayer modes are fun, but awfully similar. The maps are drawn from the Story Mode levels, as are the cast of characters. Maps and characters are progressively unlocked (some only available when you complete levels with better stats). Battle is frantic and captures some of the excitement of the more scripted campaign, while understandably dumbing down features that make the Story Mode shine. In the end, Showdown multiplayer is a mandatory addition that will give you a chance to enjoy the world outside the Story Mode. It's competent and diverting but Showdown is not really what Red Dead Revolver is good at.

AMBIENCE, PARD'NER

Perhaps the single feature that defines Red Dead Revolver is the painstaking attention to detail

that Rockstar San Diego has used in recreating the distinctive spaghetti Western feel. Just as GTA 3 took us into the sleazy fast car driving, hooker shooting, drug running frenzy of Some Movie I've Not Seen, Red Dead Revolver echoes the Clint Eastwood of "The Good, The Bad and The Ugly", "Unforgiven" or any number of tough justice Westerns.

Hats off to Rockstar San Diego for the art direction, which takes this out of the Flavoured Shooter category (as including ninjas and Russians) and into a landscape of its own. It would be a pity to spoil the details but there's enough deep red in these deserts to soften the heart of even the grumpiest action game cynic. The excellent voice acting of good script, the whooping and hollering, the stirring music and amazing environmental effects make this game an experience as much as the gunplay. Cool breezes blow through still towns, Gun smoke clouds the scene of battle and direct sunlight obscures Red's vision.

The appeal of Red Dead Revolver is equal parts brutal gun stand offs and amazing ambience. Ultimately, it's a pity that the game is so true to its action roots. Later story mode levels are merciless, requiring repeated attempts that soon become tiresome. The high level of repetition means that replay value is compromised in the campaign. The multitap play is a blast but and as least as robust as most of the games on the market. You'll pull Red Dead Revolver out for the occasional Showdown but the Story Mode is the meat in this sandwich. Something of a One-Way Ride but this trip is certainly worth the price of admission. Recommended.

/ JOHN DEWHURST



PSW VERDICT	
UPPERS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Strong gunplay > Great setting and music > Good variety in missions > High Noon mode 	DOWNERS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Lacklustre deathmatch > Repetitious campaign > Journal unlockables poor > Only moderate replay value
GRAPHICS > Crisp and stylise. Very nice indeed	9
SOUNDS > Reasonable SFX and western music	7
GAMEPLAY > Polished shooting action done right	9
OVERALL SCORE Red Dead Revolver is a strong single player experience that will shine on the first time through. Showdown and Replay of the campaign will not be as exciting.	
9	



HITMAN: CONTRACTS

Everyone's favourite slap-headed assassin recounts his bloody life story in this latest instalment, with added gore and extra violence.



> TYPE	ACTION
> PLAYERS	1
> OUT	NOW
> PUBLISHER	EIDOS
> DEVELOPER	IO
> ONLINE	NO

OTHER HITMEN HAVE IT EASY COMPARED TO

Agent 47. Look at Leon – he got to perv around with a young Natalie Portman for a week. No such luck for Agent 47. He's been saddled with permanent baldness and a barcode stamped on the back of his head since he was cloned, and now he's taken a bullet to the gut in the line of duty. Life sucks and then you die.

Though you're essentially doing the same stuff as before – namely killing people for money in the sneakiest possible way – the sequel takes

a new approach in terms of how the story is told. Opening with a cut-scene that shows Agent 47 stumbling into a hotel room in Paris sporting a fresh bullet wound, it's the first time we've seen him injured and vulnerable like this. Memories of recent missions flash before him as he drifts in and out of consciousness, eventually revealing how the injury happened. These reminiscences seem to be the only thing that link a series of otherwise standard contract killings, and it's only later in the game that it all comes together. But we won't spoil it by blabbing the lot just yet.

If you played the first *Hitman* game, the first thing you'll notice about the second sequel is how missions and character names are recycled. Reworked might actually be a more appropriate term for the opening level where a trigger-happy SWAT team storms an asylum, a level set in a Rotterdam harbour in which you prevent a terrorist buying a nuclear device and another based in a hotel, but either way this plot device feels a bit cheap and clunky. Granted they're all part of Agent 47's muddled flashbacks and hallucinations, though surely there was no need

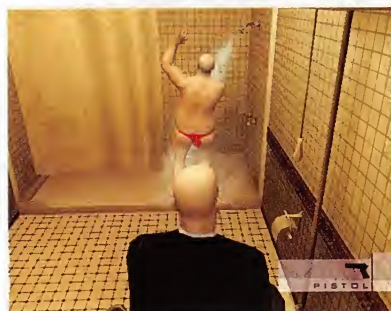
to repeat specific puzzles such as bribing a stripper to 'distract' a guard away from his car so you can plant a tracking device.

HOW SWEET, FRESH MEAT

The second thing you'll notice is how gruesome *Hitman: Contracts* is. Quite apart from Agent 47 bleeding like Mr Orange, there's the first level set inside the asylum where Agent clones with their brains blown out are slumped in every corridor and any wandering mentalists are wasted by the SWAT team. And that's just a taste of the depravity to come. Things get even more unpleasant in the much-talked about meat factory level, where you find the kidnapped girl you're supposed to rescue butchered and hanging from a meat hook. Very disturbing indeed. There also seems to be a (pardon the pun) fetish for featuring characters that are into S&M, and costumed women gyrating for the pleasure of sweaty men – this happens in at least three different levels. And let's not even go there with regards to shooting horses. The bleak, almost melancholic tone is taken much further



Leap between balconies to enter rooms undetected.



Even the cloned 47 has needs. Wonder if she likes bald men?



Interrupt his kinky games by switching on the power to electrocute him. He's sadistic like that.

"THE BLEAK, ALMOST MELANCHOLIC TONE IS TAKEN MUCH FURTHER THAN THE FIRST TWO *HITMAN* GAMES EVER DARED TO."

than the first two *Hitman* games ever dared to.

MASS MURDERER

The biggest difference between the second and the first game was that if you messed up and raised the alarm, it didn't signal the end of the mission as you could always resort to shooting your way out of trouble with some success. So while the emphasis is rightly on getting near your target with the minimum of fuss and then escaping without being seen, the punishment for a tiny error of judgement isn't as catastrophic as in, say, *Splinter Cell*.

On the easiest difficulty setting *Hitman: Contracts* is generous enough to decrease the alarm state of enemies pretty quickly if you find a hiding place or change into a new disguise without anyone noticing. If anything, it's now

too straightforward to blast past enemies. Whereas you can take plenty of damage, one shot from a moderately powerful weapon can kill three enemies at once and it's only a limited amount of ammo that prevents a massacre occurring in every level. That's not just because of the zoomed-in first-person view either, as it's just as easy firing in third-person. It's really due to enemies who aren't particularly bright when they're engaged in a shoot-out, plus the fact that your primary target rarely flees from the scene once you're discovered.

This sums up how you'll probably approach missions; you start off with the best intentions to be patient and stealthy, consulting the map so you can plot a route and watch the blips that represent enemies, and using the fibre wire only when it's absolutely necessary that you swap clothes with someone. Then your patience with the painfully slow build-up will finally snap after you've been caught several times and used up all your allocated saves. The thing is, the ensuing carnage nearly always gets the job done in half the time.

ON THE OFFENSIVE

Hitman: Contracts is likely to upset the following groups:



FEMINISTS

Almost every level features a half-naked lapdancer, stripper or S&M lover who's at the mercy of men. Ban this sick filth!



R.S.P.C.A.

At Beldingford Manor you can shoot dogs and poison horses by pouring weedkiller into their drinking water. Ban this sick filth!

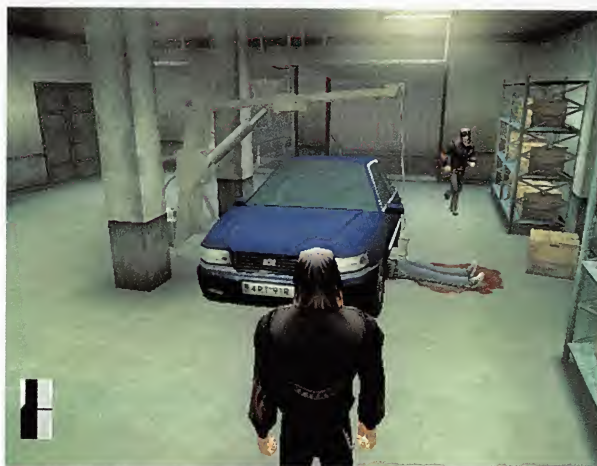


N.S.P.C.C.

The Meat King and his brother are into young girls and have even strung a victim up for their sick pleasure. Ban this sick filth! Seriously.

TO THE MANOR BORN

Those who are prepared to put the effort in and resist taking the easier bullet-spraying option might not need to squeeze the trigger at all. Take the Beldingford Manor level, for example – your mission is to assassinate the Lord and his heir, and then rescue a kidnapped young man from the stables who's to be hunted the next day as sport. Now, rushing straight into the manor is a no-go thanks to a small army of shotgun-carrying groundsmen, hounds that become suspicious of your alien scent no matter what your disguise, and yet more staff and party guests roaming around inside the mansion. Instead you must take a wide berth around the outskirts of the grounds and find an open window to climb through. Once inside you're alerted to the fact that the Lord wants some whiskey – an obvious clue that you must find some poison, drop it into the glass and assume the disguise of the butler to give it to him. As for Beldingford's heir, he's asleep upstairs and can be smothered with a pillow. The rescue, meanwhile, entails diverting guards



Figures - although we'd have guessed a lawyer would be more partial to a few lines of cocaine.



Blast the Meat King through the open window. He's a nasty piece of work who deserves it.

away from the stables by switching off their TV porn channel at the satellite box outside, followed by poisoning the horses' drinking water with weed killer so that their whining doesn't alert any enemies. Like in the previous games, the 100% correct way to complete each job involves following this kind of very convoluted process that will, nevertheless, guarantee you don't get caught. What usually happens instead though, is that you stumble across parts of the sequence by accident and perform them out of sync. But since there's no correct order as such you can gradually piece together what you're supposed to do and then replay the level to try it out in the correct order. But than kind of saps the fun out of the game.

FANCY DRESS

The methods of execution should be familiar to anyone who's played either of the first two games, and to be honest they're wearing thin. We're sure we've used the poison trick before, as well as the drug that sends an enemy to sleep, and the power shortage that forces an enemy to move from his guard post to inspect the problem. Even the laxative that causes a target to visit a nice, quiet toilet away from prying eyes seems oddly familiar. Equally old hat and also a bit silly now that the novelty value is lost are the number of disguises Agent 47 goes through. Here he loses any menace or dignity by donning an assortment of demeaning attire, including a ridiculous S&M getup.



The worst thing you can do is assassinate in broad daylight.



"Now you run straight at me really quickly! It'll be fun!"

THE PERFECT KILL

The executions are more convoluted than ever.



Disguise yourself as one of the workers carrying grocery crates into the enemy's HQ.



Pick up the laxatives and drop them into the borsch soup bubbling away on the stove.



Watch as the soup is served to your target, but don't get too close or he'll get suspicious.



He's too busy groaning on the dumpster to notice the dual pistols aimed at his head.



Stand still and turn away so they don't get suspicious.



The rapid fire dual silverballers are Agent 47's stock weapon.



The clever types will poison the lord's whisky as a butler.



On the plus side, at least most of them cover his distinctive shiny bonce and hardened features, making it more likely that the guards would be fooled – especially when they've been warned to be on the lookout for a 'suspicious-looking bald man'. After all, how many suspicious-looking bald men can there be among their ranks? Their mistrust of strangers is now also aroused if you act out of character too, and this is shown by a pulsing sensor in the bottom-left corner of the screen that flashes red if and when danger is near. Let's face it: nobody in their right mind would hope to gain entry into a nightclub by sprinting 50 yards towards the burly doormen and then further goading them by running around in circles under their noses. In real life you'd lose your teeth, and in *Hitman: Contracts* you get a gun shoved in your face. It's actually quite unnerving to see guards turn to stare at you as you walk past them and then scratch their heads as they realise they haven't seen your face before.

MIND GAMES

The sprawling levels might not be to everyone's tastes, but their size probably accounts for why good shooting positions and hiding places to escape from suspicious guards are so easy to find. Beldingford Manor is probably the pick of

the bunch, simply because the place feels like it could exist; there's a lake, a tennis court, a huge garden, a maze, the stables, plus the mansion itself complete with a study, furnished bedrooms, a games room and sections such as spiral towers. Amazing. Siberia is another outstanding level and is just as huge, with the howling wind and blizzard conditions making hearing and seeing very difficult, so as to force a more cautious approach. The sound is excellent throughout and is bolstered by another impressive music score that always seems to suit the type of approach you take.

There's also something very subtle going on with the game's graphics. The use of colour is incredible throughout and each level boasts its own identifiable theme, from the sterile, bathroom-tile blue of the asylum to the vibrant reds in the blood-spattered meat factory. Everything is shrouded in a kind of hazy, dreamlike filter too that fits perfectly with Agent 47's condition back in the hotel. There's even a throwaway nod to bullet-time that occurs just before you die, where the action slows to a crawl and the colour drains. The only letdown is Agent 47's character modelling – he looks like he's sliding on a sheet of ice rather than walking, especially when using stairs.

Don't expect any groundbreaking features

and there's plenty to enjoy in this more-of-the-same sequel. The violent concept is still appealing and the fleshing-out of Agent 47's character works very well indeed, while there's now even more scope to complete missions as either a silent assassin or a mass murderer. Patience is still required in abundance, however, and the long-winded perfect executions are starting to become tiresome and repetitive. *Hitman: Contracts* is probably about as far as the idea in its current state can be taken. Some new ideas are sorely needed for *Hitman 4*.

/ JONATHAN TODD

PSW VERDICT

UPPERS

- Tries to tell a new story
- Ups the brutality
- Looks great
- Sounds great

DOWNERS

- Recycled plots
- Stealth a bit fussy
- Shooting too easy
- Convoluted executions

GRAPHICS Vivid colours with a dreamlike quality

8

SOUNDS Atmospheric music and sparse dialogue

8

GAMEPLAY Same as before, with the same pros and cons

7

OVERALL SCORE

Hitman: Contracts delivers exactly what you expect. No more, no less. If you're already a fan then that's great news, but duplicating missions smacks of laziness rather than ingenuity.

7



TRANSFORMERS

Warrior Robots In Disguise kick mechanised posterior in a very well crafted action blaster – with extra driving bits.



> TYPE	ACTION ADVENTURE
> PLAYERS	1
> OUT	NOW
> PUBLISHER	ATARI
> DEVELOPER	MELBOURNE HOUSE
> ONLINE	NO

THE RUNAWAY TOY HIT OF THE '80S IS BACK!

And so are crappy opening sentences! Toy-maker Hasbro has finally seen the light, dispatching the ever-more bizarre *Transformers* variants to oblivion and taking the series back to its roots. So it's goodbye to the low quality 'Unconvincibots' and 'Fall-Aparticons' and it's a welcome return to the power of Optimus Prime, Megatron and their Autobot/Decepticon cohorts. This return to core values has spawned a whole new series of toys, comic books, TV shows and of course, this video game.

The good news is that this resurgence in the quality of the brand also extends to the game. This is no cheap, faddish cash-in – it's a very carefully constructed game that makes good use of key Transformers. Although it only has a small number of levels, there's plenty to get stuck into and a lot of replay potential.

The game kicks off a million years ago on the planet Cybertron. As the Autobot/Decepticon war draws to a close, the evil Megatron receives a strange transmission from the powerful Minicoms – a race of *Transformers* thought to be

extinct. Following the signal to its source takes the Decepticons back to present day Earth where they attempt to track down the Minicoms and use them for their own diabolical ends. The good news is that Optimus Prime and a handful of his Autobot buddies have also made it to Earth, and that's where you come in.

MECHANISED MURDER

Your mission is to scour the eight levels, dispatching Decepticon forces, rescue the Minicoms and then take on Megatron's key lieutenants in a series of show-stopping, high-powered, end-of-level boss confrontations.

To begin with, the game looks ludicrously short. Although the levels are very large, there's no compulsion to explore them all and you can waltz all the way through to the end of each stage with little problem. Only then do things become tough – impossibly tough. The Decepticon bosses are vastly over-powered and in their basic forms, the lowly Autobots stand no chance whatsoever.

You need to return to the level, explore more

thoroughly and locate the Minicoms. Each Minicom features a unique power-up ability, be it enhanced weapons, a defensive screen or a special attack. As you progress through the game, you build up a vast range of different Minicoms, and you can mix and match their powers in order to get the best combinations for doing battle with the bosses.

Minicoms are usually well guarded by a Decepticon, and there's a range of ambush set-pieces where you'll suddenly be swamped by an attacking force. When you're caught out like this, it's best to make use of your transforming capabilities, and burn off into the distance as fast as you possibly can to rethink your strategy.

However, even with Minicom help, the end-of-level boss fights are still mighty tough. As they can transform into the likes of helicopters and jet planes, you really stand no chance of damaging them until they transform back into robotic form. Which isn't very often.

The real strength of the game is its longevity. Even when a level is complete, the chances are that you didn't locate all of the Minicoms (and

TRANSFORMERS IN A NUTSHELL

Transformers' clever gameplay explained in four easy steps.



1. KILL DECEPTICONS

What's going on? A lot of the game involves exploring the 3D landscapes and blasting the hell out of the enemy Decepticons. Is that it? No – you can avoid them, or use the sniper scope Minicom attachment to pick them off from range.



2. TRANSFORM!

Oooh, just like the toy! Indeed – one button press turns your character into his vehicular counterpart. But what's the point? Well, if you can't shoot you can't use any Minicom power-ups. You're defenceless, but can move about quicker.



3. FIND THE MINICOMS

What are the Minicoms? They are very small Transformers allied to the Autobots. You find them dotted around each level. What do they do? You can add up to four different Minicoms to your Autobot, opening up a range of power-up options and weapons.



4. BLAST THE BOSSES

Where are the bosses? They lurk at the end of each level. They're usually easy to find, and extremely tough to beat. Any advice for beating them? Don't rush to the end of the level. Explore them all thoroughly and make sure you find every Minicom power-up.

Attach enough Minicoms and you'll be all-powerfull.



"THIS IS NO CHEAP, FADDISH CASH-IN – IT'S A VERY CAREFULLY CONSTRUCTED GAME THAT MAKES GOOD USE OF KEY TRANSFORMERS."



seriously, it's suicide to progress without all of them) and there's also the small matter of the Datacoms. These are small icons that unlock bonus items on the game's main menu. Rather cunningly, some of them are located in areas only accessible using Minicoms gained from later levels. For example, one might be located on a faraway island surrounded by water – the only way to get there would be to find the glider wing Minicom on a later level, then go back and use it to get the Datacom. Put together these shenanigans should make the game last a few more days once you've defeated the final boss.

LACK OF SPIT 'N' POLISH

The one stand out problem with *Transformers* concerns the look and feel of the game. The graphics capture the primary colour feel of the comic books (and the toys themselves) and the representations of Optimus Prime, Starscream, Megatron and all the other favourites are bang-on. However, the graphics themselves seem to annoyingly flick between low and high detail whenever there's a lot of action on-screen, and

slowdown and glitching rear their ugly heads at times. The detail on the whole is acceptable but the backgrounds do look a little bland – and no amount of lighting and lens flare effects will disguise that. But regardless of the game's occasional ugliness, it's still worth a look for the charismatic characters and the clever game design. If only all TV to video game spin-offs were this good. *Turtles*, we're talking to you.

PSW VERDICT

UPPERS		DOWNERS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tough and challenging Very good replay value Great characters Massive destruction potential 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only eight levels Glitching graphics Infuriating boss fights Driving bits poor 	
GRAPHICS	> Good, but let down by low-res glitching		6
SOUNDS	> Excellent crunching effects but poor music		7
GAMEPLAY	> Well designed, very rewarding and fun		8
OVERALL SCORE			
<i>Transformers</i> is no kids game – it's very challenging with tough boss confrontations and features a wealth of replay potential.			
			7



ONIMUSHA BLADE WARRIORS



Get four mates round and spill their innards all over that nice rug in the lounge with this *Onimusha*-themed beat 'em up.

> TYPE	FIGHTING
> PLAYERS	1-4
> OUT	NOW
> PUBLISHER	CAPCOM
> DEVELOPER	CAPCOM
> ONLINE	NO

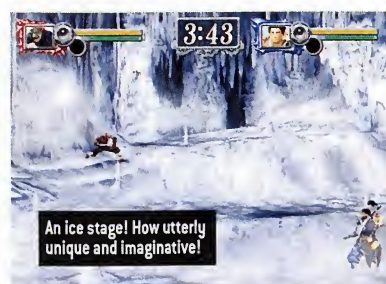
IN MARKETING CIRCLES THEY CALL IT A 'brand extension'. It's when a popular brand or product is turned into lots of other products – toys, lunch boxes and so on. And now Capcom has decided that its *Onimusha* brand – originally an offshoot of the *Resident Evil* franchise – has enough clout of its own to warrant a brand extension of its own. The result is *Onimusha Blade Warriors* – a beat 'em up spin-off from the action slasher that started out as a survival horror game. Still with us? Good.

Choosing between an extensive selection of fighters from the *Onimusha* universe and beyond, players are given the choice of running through a short Story mode to upgrade their favourite characters with, or to leap straight into the multiplayer action. Although the choice of characters is initially restricted to twelve, a further twenty are unlocked by meeting a number of set tasks, along with a multitude of stages and arenas to do the actual fighting in. Everything looks suitably *Onimusha*-like. The

graphics are more than adequate, and compare favourably in every way to those of previous *Onimusha* titles. Characters are large, detailed and well-animated. Sound is well handled too, but lacks the option to have subtitled Japanese voices in place of the dubbed English dialogue. This may be a small point, but we like to hear the original voices; in much the same way that we prefer foreign-language movies to be subtitled.

KILL THEM DEAD

In Story mode, you're given the chance to enhance the skills of your favourite *Onimusha* heroes by using captured souls to improve your attributes in Attack, Defence and Magic. It'll feel instantly familiar to anyone who's played earlier games in the series. Dragging your chosen hero through the Story mode will reward them with upgraded weapons and items for added damage. Players can also choose whether to play as the good guys or the evil demons. Since these characters take very different paths through the story it's possible to end the game by either



FOURPLAY

Onimusha Blade Warriors isn't the only PS2 game to offer four-way multiplayer battles.



PES3

The undisputed king of the pitch is even better fun when the multitap is employed to accommodate four players at once. The only thing you'll argue about is who goes in goal.



TIMESPLITTERS 2

Fire-fight fun on an unprecedented scale, *'Splitters* also supports the multitap for an orgy of four-player, high-explosive death. Some characters even have large breasts too.



CHAMPIONS OF NORRATH

If you and your friends enjoy nothing better than slaughtering orcs, then this will have you in a state of near orgasmic joy for the fourteen years or so it takes to finish.



"IT'S POSSIBLE TO END THE GAME BY FREEING THE WORLD FROM EVIL, OR PLUNGING IT INTO AN ETERNITY OF DARKNESS."



The flickering flame effects are most impressive.



freeing the world from evil, or plunging it into an eternity of darkness. Tough choice, eh?

As with all fighting games, *Onimusha Blade Warriors* works best when played against other human opponents. For those of you blessed with a multitap and lots of gaming friends, the good news is that up to four players can get their samurai on-screen at the same time to mash each other up, steal each other's souls and generally behave in a violent, anti-social manner. This is undoubtedly where the game shows its best side but sadly, it still isn't really very much fun. But as a two-player game it's nothing less than terrible. Bouts are short, options are limited and frankly, a button-mashing technique will win in most situations. When compared to leading titles in the beat 'em up genre, *Onimusha Blade Warriors* falls way short because it lacks the depth and competitive spirit of its peers.

Disappointingly, it all feels just a bit too contrived. We might have been a tad more convinced by the purely digital controls if it

wasn't for many other games *already* showing how games like this could work brilliantly in full analogue 3D. This is an almost deliberately reductive and archaic affair that ends up feeling half-hearted. Employing three planes is a bizarre solution to the problem of multiple enemies in a 3D environment too. Switching planes is mostly pointless, aside from catching the few ranged enemies firing at you from the relative safety of a distant rooftop, until you get to the boss encounters. Then your enemy's inhuman grasp of the game's mechanics and timing will see you locked into a frustrating war of attrition, constantly retrying the same battle until success occurs, most probably through sheer good fortune.

Unless you're absolutely desperate to see more of the *Onimusha* universe, and we do mean desperate, then fighting games such as *Soul Calibur II* would serve you far better – offering a billion times more fighting enjoyment than *Onimusha Blade Warriors* does. Even those who want nothing more than a good long

session moving Samanosuke about their television set will be far better off waiting for the considerably superior *Onimusha 3*, which features a twisted story, time travel and the opportunity to play as hard-as-nails French film hero, Jean Reno. In the meantime stick with the best brawler of them all – *Soul Calibur II*.

/ MARK SORRELL

PSW VERDICT

UPPERS

- > Plenty of characters
- > Lots to unlock
- > Some lovely effects
- > Four-player is quite fun

DOWNERS

- > Clumsy controls
- > Confusing level structure
- > Random difficulty curve
- > Immensely repetitive

GRAPHICS > Adequate with some moments of majesty

7

SOUNDS > Adequate without any moments of majesty

6

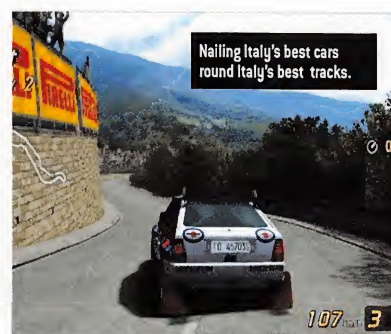
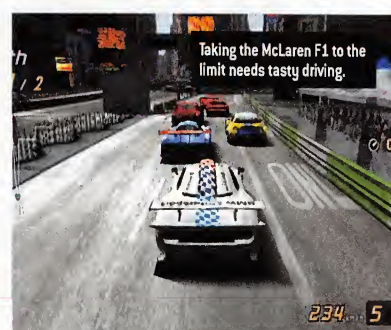
GAMEPLAY > Not even approaching adequate

3

OVERALL SCORE

Smells distinctly like a hasty cash-in to us. Graphically sound but ruined by awkward and unrewarding gameplay. Only the most dedicated of *Onimusha* fanboys will find any enjoyment.

5



GRAN TURISMO 4 PROLOGUE SIGNATURE EDITION

Sneak preview of the racing game to end them all at a price you can't refuse. Or an overpriced demo at a price you can?



> TYPE	DRIVING
> PLAYERS	1
> OUT	NOW
> PUBLISHER	SONY
> DEVELOPER	POLYPHONY
> ONLINE	NO

THERE'S ONLY ONE THING BETTER THAN

getting a game you really want sooner than you expected and that's a lifetime's supply of beer and smokes. Running a close second to beer and smokes is a edited down version of that long awaited game at a cut down price. Thanks to the good bods at Sony, you will be getting exactly that in the form of the outrageously named *Gran Turismo 4 Prologue Signature Edition*. Consisting of five tracks and around 50 cars to drive around them, this is quite some way from the full game

that's due to arrive in September. It offers a remarkably large selection of options for what is effectively a demo, but then again most game demos don't cost anything. Adding extra value to the package is a second DVD containing behind-the-scenes footage of the game being made. There's also an audience with Kazunori Yamauchi, plus scenes of engineers poking microphones up cars' bums and most exciting of all, previews of some of the content the full game will offer.

The five tracks on offer are a mix of traditional racetracks, city-based tracks, twisting country roads and dirt track rally courses. The rally track, set on the very edge of the Grand Canyon, continues the *Gran Turismo* tradition of highly technical dirt tracks where grip is always at a premium and a full understanding of drifting techniques is an absolute necessity. The fact that it's also stunningly beautiful only helps to raise the enjoyment of manhandling a 4WD rally monster about its undulating curves and breakneck bends. By comparison, the two regular racetracks, Tsukuba Circuit and Fuji

Speedway, are far more traditional affairs and perhaps a little bland. Although they both offer a good solid challenge, neither is particularly pleasing on the eye, consisting, as they do, of little more than a strip of tarmac in the middle of a bloody great field.

The New York track provides a far greater spectacle with neon dipped, high-rise monoliths bordering a track that offers the chance to get up to some huge speeds. That sensation is multiplied by those massive buildings looming up about the track but sadly the overall experience is set back by the large number of right angled corners dotted about the track, forcing drivers into an unsatisfyingly slow route around the course.

Things take a marked turn for the better with the final offering, the simply divine Citta di Aria. Set among the tight, twisting roads of a small Italian village, it is a joyous mixture of fast, challenging driving and beautiful scenery. The views from the mountaintop town over the surrounding plains are absolutely stunning, as is the architecture of the village itself. In fact, it's all



The in-car view presents the greatest feeling of speed.



ALTERNATIVELY

Other cheap PS2 racers - and these are full games!

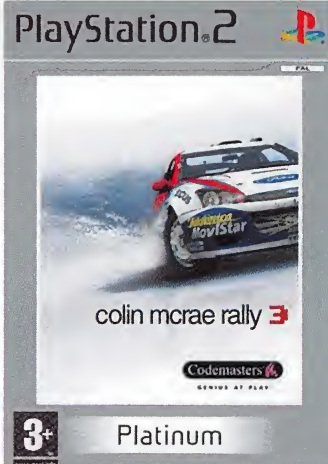
FORD RACING 2



What? A decent arcade racer with a huge variety of different tracks and Ford motors to race about.

Buy? Massively varied (or as varied as a game made up entirely of Ford motors can be) and easy on the eye, it's worth a punt.

COLIN McRAE RALLY 3



What? Rally masterpiece with a superb selection of tracks and some of the best pace notes ever committed to disc.

Buy? If you like your cars dirty and your roads even dirtier, this is essential stuff. One of the best ever rally games on PS2.

BURNOUT 2



What? One of the most exciting things you can do with a small piece of vibrating plastic. The definitive arcade racer.

Buy? Yes, so long as you have a pulse you must own this rollercoaster ride of an arcade smash 'em up.

GRAN TURISMO 3



What? The prelude to Polyphony's latest masterwork with hundreds of cars and piles of tracks for your money.

Buy? *Gran Turismo 4* is not that far away but if you have no patience this is the most complete driving game out there.

too easy to be distracted by some jaw-dropping vista precisely when you should be throwing on the anchors of your 500bhp, aerodynamically honed road-missile.

WHEN I BANG MY HEAD ON THE DASH

The rest of the game is taken up by Driving School — a five-part tutorial in racing, split over some forty-five separate lessons. This is where you can unlock cars to then use at your leisure in the arcade mode. Sadly, there's little more than the desire for new cars to keep you interested in this section. In fact, this whole section is something of a thorn that's been wedged deeply in to the neck of the game. Considering that, aside from this, the only other thing to do is compete in endless time trials, the poor design and frustrating structure of Driving School becomes all the more pronounced. It starts so simply it's nothing more than dull, but it soon graduates to frustratingly difficult with little filling out the middle ground. By the time you've made it into the fifth section of the school, by far the largest part, you'll find

yourself in races lasting upwards of five or even fifteen minutes where a single mistake, such as running off the track or touching another car, will see you fail the test. Rather than pushing your driving skills it merely pushes your patience far past its limits, revealing a startling lack of understanding of what makes a game enjoyable. It's greatly at odds with the supreme technical achievement on show elsewhere here.

Still, when those tests are finally passed and the full regiment of motors becomes available, the experience of piloting them, particularly round the stunning Citta di Aria is possibly the greatest driving experience PlayStation2 has to offer — while it lasts. Don't expect that to be very long though, as even the keenest racing fan will find the limitations of this title too much to bear before long.

At last we have found a good reason for delays — being able to play at least some of *Gran Turismo 4* before we ever thought possible. Although this is fundamentally a fun-sized gaming snack and some considerable distance away from the undoubted majesty of the real

thing, when the snack in question is made from such fine ingredients. It is hard to feel let down. *Gran Turismo 4 Prologue* is a recommended purchase for all those who want to sample the finest driving game the world has to offer. Just bear in mind that a sample is all you'll get and that while your appetite may be whetted, it certainly won't be sated

/ MARK SORRELL

PSW VERDICT

> UPPERS

- > Absolutely gorgeous
- > Bargain price
- > Fantastic handling
- > The Citta di Ariagame

> DOWNERS

- > No tuning options
- > Short lived
- > School section is terrible
- > Still no damage

GRAPHICS > The greatest graphics on PlayStation2 bar **10**

SOUNDS > Best-sounding cars ever but tunes are lacking **8**

GAMEPLAY > Driving is intense but little structure overall **6**

OVERALL SCORE

A supreme technical achievement let down by a lack of depth. *Prologue* is an extremely small slice of heaven for car fanciers but will be wasted on those without petrol in the blood.

6



WAY OF THE SAMURAI 2

You're a big, tough samurai with an even bigger sword – which, if anyone gives you any grief, you'll probably ram straight up their arse before lopping their heads off.

> TYPE ACTION ADVENTURE
> PLAYERS 1
> OUT NOW
> PUBLISHER CAPCOM
> DEVELOPER AQURE
> ONLINE NO

YOU'RE AN IMMENSELY TOUGH SAMURAI, BUT before you start cutting people up, you need to eat something. The introductory cut-scene shows you staggering into town, half-starved. You collapse at the feet of a cute little girl and she offers you her lunch. What happens from here on in is entirely up to you. Do you want to say "Thank you" and be nice to her? Or do you just want to chop off her head? It's entirely up to you. That's how things work in *Way of the Samurai 2*. Your quest is brief, set over ten critical days in the history of a small village in feudal Japan. It's

a lawless time and the corrupt local magistrates fear the ambitions of the Aoto gang – a group of Yakuza with designs on running the joint.

Way of the Samurai 2 feels like nothing so much as a classic Western. You can almost smell the sawdust on the floor, and half expect John Wayne to ride into town at any moment. You're the lone gunman (but with swords) wandering into town to make your mark. How you do that is entirely up to you. You can be a massive bastard to everyone and end up as an evil gang boss, or you can become the town's guardian angel, righting wrongs and spreading the gospel of peace and love. Again, it's entirely up to you.

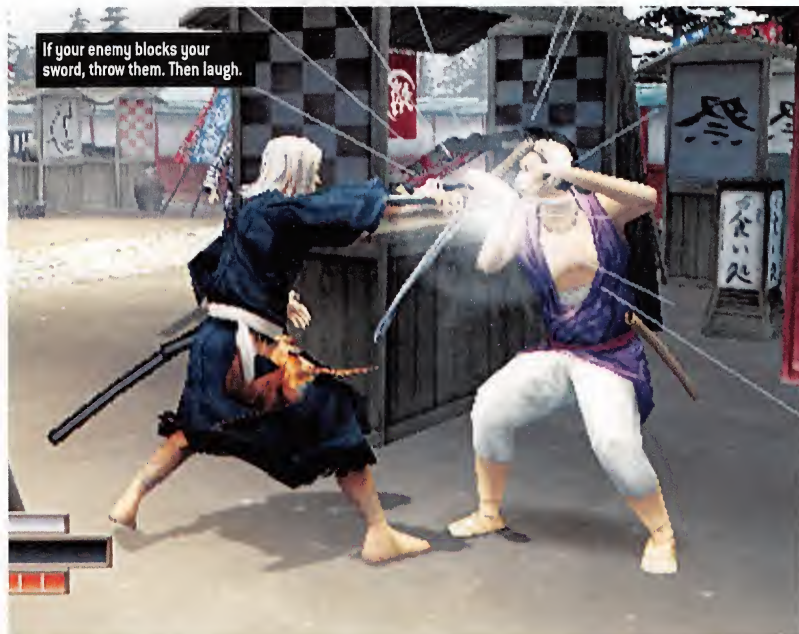
This game sets out to tell you a unique story and provides a huge range of possibilities to explore. There are so many branches that you'll have to play through the game many, many times if you want to see them all. Even if you only play through once, you'll be left with the feeling that you've experienced an adventure that was individually hand-carved, just for you. The absurd level of attention to detail in the game's storytelling makes *Way of the Samurai 2* a quite unique proposition, matched only by its predecessor. Although the tale is far from epic, its utterly unique and charmingly Japanese nature means that it will give you something few other games can. The addition of dubbing rather than subtitles to tell the tale may disappoint purists

but the voices used do at least manage to sound very much like those classic kung-fu movies: "He is womaniser!", "Yes, but he an expert... in throwing knives!" You know what we mean.

FIGHT... OR DIE!

Sadly, while these plot aspects are wrought with quite uncommon skill and impressive cunning, the technical aspects of the game are somewhat lacking, if not much worse. The controls are deeply unpleasant, both for combat situations and general exploration duties, while the camera is as vile and disagreeable as trying to eat stale muesli from a bowl made from your own skull. Aside from talking to folk to progress the story and a tiny bit of exploring, the only other thing left to do is fight. While there are a wide variety





If your enemy blocks your sword, throw them. Then laugh.

Yakata

Another gruesome kill for our samurai of death.



Shi



Swordfights can be brutal, bloody affairs.



Every locale seems calm and peaceful and pretty.



Torataro Hirata
YOU WANNA START SOMETHIN?

"Yeah! Come on, mate! I'll have ya! Right here!"

of moves available to you and more to learn with every blade you acquire, the fighting is somewhat awkward considering its importance to the game. There seems no way to choose between enemies, and positioning is generally unintuitive. Combos are simple button mashing affairs and there's little room for inspiration or improvisation. Most battles simply boil down to you blocking until the enemy pauses their attack and then launching into a combo of your own. Sometimes you can use a throw on a blocking enemy but that is pretty much as in-depth as the fighting gets. With titles such as *Soul Calibur 2* showing how intense sword battles can be. It's a shame that *Way of the Samurai 2* barely builds upon its predecessor in this respect. Surely more to being a samurai than mere button mashing?

If this was one of those 'Choose Your Own Adventure' books, it would be called 'The Legend of the Wicked Samurai Badass' and it would be the best one ever by miles. If it was a television series, it would be called 'The Legend of the Wicked Samurai Badass' and it would be essential viewing at 11:30 on Friday nights on SBS. Sadly, it's a game and as a game... well, it's not so good.

If you have the patience to look past the clunky combat and disfigured camera, there's an unusual but engaging game underneath with an atmosphere, intelligence and charm you'll be hard pressed to find anywhere else. It's certainly not a title for action maniacs, nor for anyone wanting a quick fix of lightweight gaming. However, for those gamers who like their games to try something different this is a great little title, proving that there is more to life than Hollywood blockbuster-licensed shooters and stealth based global conspiracy games.

"LIKE A CLASSIC WESTERN, BUT WITH SWORDS, YOU HALF EXPECT JOHN WAYNE TO RIDE INTO TOWN AT ANY MOMENT."

If the developer had spent as much time refining the combat engine as it appears to have spent on the storytelling one, we would have a classic on our hands. As matters stand we're left merely with a white elephant, albeit one with vast reservoirs of charm and samurais and massive swords and boys wearing skirts.

/ MARK SORRELL



Aoto gang headquarters. Get jobs from the thugs.

THE GOOD THE BAD AND THE UGLY

There are three basic factions in Amahara. Here's your guide on who to help and who to slice mercilessly into a million tiny pieces.



THE MAGISTRATES

The lawmen of this Godforsaken town. But are they as clean living and honest as they seem? No, of course they're not.



THE AOTO GANG

The evil baddies of this Godforsaken town. But are they as mean and horrible as they first seem? Yes, of course they are.



YOU

A blank canvas new to this Godforsaken town. But are you as free to do as you wish as it may seem? Yes, you are.

PSW VERDICT

UPPERS

- > Fantastic evolving storyline
- > Massive replay value
- > Great atmosphere
- > Unique sense of choice

DOWNERS

- > Controls are dubious
- > Camera is malignant
- > Graphics are patchy
- > Fighting lacks polish

GRAPHICS > Plain but suitable for the task

6

SOUNDS > Evocative music, deliberately bad dubbing

8

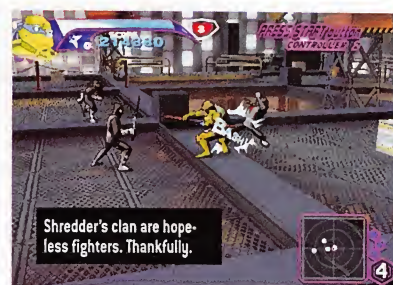
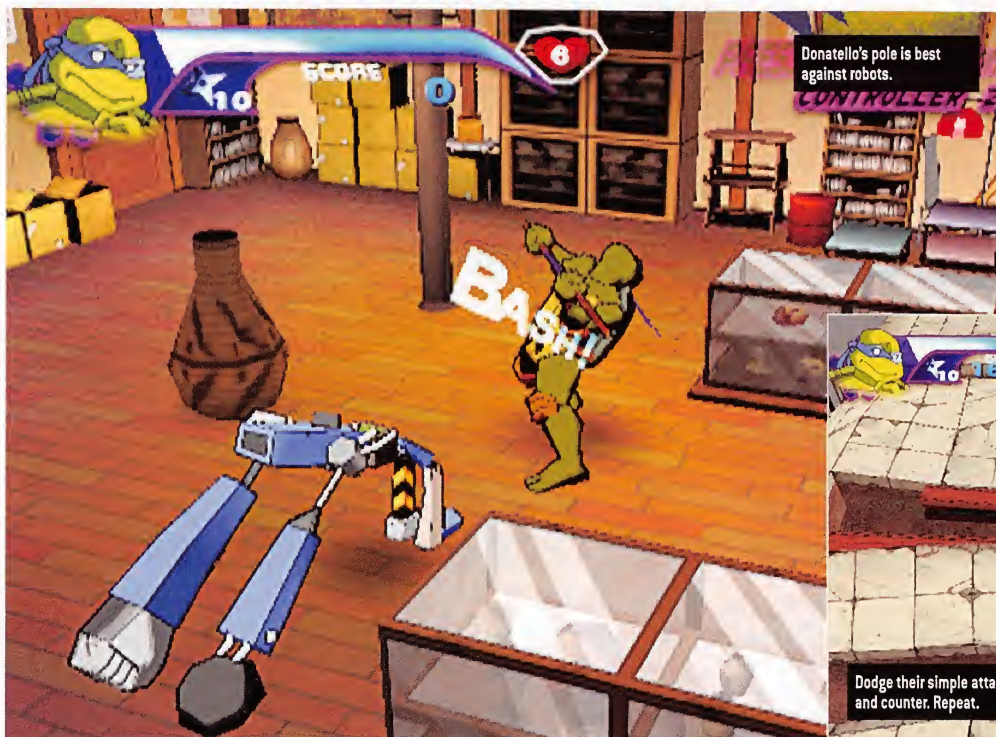
GAMEPLAY > Great story, middling swordplay

6

OVERALL SCORE

A strange and unique game – anyone wanting something a bit different will love it. Anyone who wants to shoot Russians in the neck or drive cars through big piles of boxes might not love it so much.

7



TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES

IN THE '80S THEY PUT 'COWABUNGA' IN THE DICTIONARY AND EMPTIED THE WALLETS OF PARENTS EVERYWHERE. PLEASE DON'T LET THEM DO IT AGAIN.

> TYPE	ACTION
> PLAYERS	1-2
> OUT	APRIL
> PUBLISHER	KONAMI
> DEVELOPER	KONAMI
> ONLINE	NO

ENTERTAINING KIDS WITH EXTREME VIOLENCE

while somehow managing to keep their parents happy has always made the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* unintentionally funny. After 25 minutes of turtle-based mayhem in which, rather like the *A-Team*, nobody ever actually died, each episode must finish with an absurdly patronising ethical message courtesy of moralising rat-man, Master Splinter. But that's nothing when you consider the lyrics of the new series' theme tune on which this game is based:

"Live by the code of the martial arts/Never fight unless someone else starts/Always stick together no matter what/If all else fails then it's time to KICK BUTT!" We can just about hear the S-Club Seven types singing it now. Pure, unadulterated genius.

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles the game is faced with the same dilemma of trying to keep its core audience of destruction-hungry kids happy while appeasing their sensitive modern parents. The problem with this approach is that most of us aren't actually kids anymore.

The overall look will doubtless appeal to older gamers who ploughed their pocket money into the very similar 1989 arcade machine and the character design has its roots in the adult-flavoured comic. Unfortunately though, the actual gameplay is aimed squarely at kids to the point where it becomes patronising in its simplicity. The opening level finds Sensei Splinter teaching the turtles about the importance of staying in the shadows and avoiding conflict, but as soon as the level begins all talk of stealth goes out of the window in favour of mindless button bashing.

SHELLSHOCK

Each turtle has a basic slash attack, a more powerful spin attack, an uppercut, a quick dash move and the ability to throw shuriken blades. New moves such as a jump attack are unlocked by completing a training challenge every other level, but you only ever really need to use the basic moves to rack up combos and complete the game. And despite their unique weapons and supposedly different reaches and attack speeds, the turtles handle almost identically. Another minor gripe is that once you've chosen your turtle you're stuck with him for the duration. We would have preferred to have been able to switch characters between levels to avoid having to hear the same bloody catchphrases over and over again for the entire game. New modes and characters, such as masked vigilante Casey Jones, can be unlocked if you do stick with it and repeat the game using all four turtles, but it's the kind of laboured replay value that just proves annoying... kinda like making you replay a level from the very beginning if you die.

Once you've completed the first level you've



Nice try, but "transparent ninja" doesn't equal "invisible ninja".



You can unlock Splinter, but he fights just like everyone else.



Send enemies flying into each other for "fun".



Spin attacks leave you exposed, but they're strong.

TURTLE POWER

A GUIDE TO THE FOUR HEROES IN A HALF SHELL.

LEONARDO



Weapon: Twin Katana swords.

Profile: Leader of the group and the best all-rounder who boasts good reach and speed, but not the best jump attack.

Lamest catchphrase: "Slice 'n dice!"

DONATELLO



Weapon: Bo staff.

Profile: The inventor of the group who has the best reach and can attain the highest combos, but he's slow.

Lamest catchphrase: "Anyone for stickball?"

RAPHAEL



Weapon: Three-pronged forks.

Profile: The group hothead who probably possesses the best close-combat skills but easily has the worst reach.

Lamest catchphrase: "Out of my way, nimrod!"

MICHELANGELO



Weapon: Nunchaku.

Profile: The practical joker of the group who can pull off fast combos, but is weak with a vulnerable jump attack.

Lamest catchphrase: "Michosaurus Rex!"



They'll stand off until you make your move. Bloody fools.



By this stage your digits will be bleeding.

mastered the game and, apart from some new enemy types, seen pretty much everything there is to see. Each of the levels play in much the same way; you move through a linear path and must defeat every enemy who shows up on the radar before being allowed to pass an invisible barrier. Enemies don't actually populate the level to begin with, but simply drop in every few seconds in clumps, which looks especially silly in the indoor stages. It also means you do a fair amount of backtracking to clear any remaining enemies who've wandered off. Perhaps in search of a better game to star in.

MISSING IN ACTION

For the most part opponents are content to run at you in a big bulk of bodies and randomly swing their weapons. In the later levels some are granted a simple attack pattern, but by then you'll be so bored of hitting the same buttons that enemies could be running around butt-naked and you wouldn't notice. Boss characters breathe some life into proceedings, but even they are mostly forgettable and far too easy.

Those who are old enough to remember the arcade game will be aghast at the cooperative mode. Last time we looked there were four turtles, so why is it only possible for two players to team up? Take into account a camera that goes wonky when you and your partner are too far apart and no noticeable change to the difficulty or number of enemies and the multiplayer mode begins to look pretty lame. Two players can also go at it in a one-on-one fight using the turtles or unlocked characters. However, the basic attacks and absence of a block move soon leave you with the impression that you're not playing a proper beat 'em up.

For younger players at least, the game is somewhat saved by the graphics. The turtles move fluently through brightly coloured environments and thanks to the sparse detail there's no slowdown even when plenty of enemies appear onscreen at once. Cars, barrels and even robot enemies can all be blown up and exploited to take other enemies with them, which at least allows for a smidgeon of thought during the otherwise braindead fighting action.

Clearly *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* is appealing to a new generation of fans and not the same ones who watched the original '80s cartoon and loved the arcade hit. They're all grown up now and hopefully won't put up with a mediocre game that pillages their childhood memories. To be honest, today's kids are probably wary enough not to accept it either.

/ JONATHAN TODD

PSW VERDICT

UPPERS	DOWNERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pretty cel-shaded graphics Plays like the arcade hit Bosses add brief interest Tolerable in short bursts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poorly plotted story Mindless combat Boring level design No four-player team-up

GRAPHICS > Pretty enough but lacking in detail **7**

SOUNDS > Repetitive catchphrases will do your head in **6**

GAMEPLAY > Tedious button bashing with no respite **4**

OVERALL SCORE
Younger players might be more forgiving of the monotonous combat and samey level design, but anyone over the age of 12 will be bored after five minutes. Knock this turtle on the head. **5**



FALLOUT – BROTHERHOOD OF STEEL

STRAP ON YOUR FAVOURITE SHOOTING STICK AND PREPARE TO GO BUG HUNTING, POST-APOCALYPTIC STYLE.

> TYPE	ADVENTURE
> PLAYERS	1-2
> OUT	NOW
> PUBLISHER	AVOLON
> DEVELOPER	INTERPLAY
> ONLINE	NO

IT'S A DARK APOCALYPTIC FUTURE AND YOU have a gun. So begins the tale of *Fallout – Brotherhood of Steel*. It's a game for adults and make no mistake about it; we were genuinely surprised at the amount of swearing it contained. It's a real swear-dunked orgy, packed full of unpleasant characters who spout rude words with tedious regularity. In the context of such a lowbrow game this all seems a bit unnecessary.

At least the earlier PC *Fallout* games made some attempt at having plots and perhaps even trying to pass on a message more significant than: "Kill them all!" *Fallout – Brotherhood of Steel* is somewhat less noble in its aims; so long as you're really nasty to the bad guys with an axe then you're doing just fine.

This is basically *Dark Alliance* set in the future and the game makes no real attempt to hide that lineage. Anyone who has ever played a *Dark Alliance* title will immediately feel at home as the differences are minimal. These games are about button mashing and levelling up, with a hint of adventuring and exploration thrown in for good measure. And that's about it. Combat, which is by far and away the focal point for this title, is outrageously simple. At its most basic, it consists of nothing more than running up to your enemy and mashing the square button in order to take to his face with a spiked baseball bat. A single layer of complexity is added in the form of a lock-on that allows the player to use ranged weapons and move around while remaining fixed on their chosen adversary. Again, that's about it. There is no block available, as there was in the *Dark Alliance* titles and although it's possible to make your character duck, practical applications

are severely limited and its positioning on the digital pad makes use troublesome even on the rare occasions it might be useful. Lastly, you can also make your character do some kind of rolling dive to avoid incoming attacks, but this is also slow, cumbersome and requires the player to push far too many buttons all at once.

Still, simplicity alone does not mean that *Fallout – Brotherhood of Steel* isn't fun. Although running, smashing, running and smashing some more can get mighty repetitive when you take on the task alone, the two-player co-operative mode does offer a much-needed degree of diversity. Taking on the denizens of the *Fallout* universe





The lock-on can leave you dizzy and disoriented.



This young lady is a dirty girl... just how we like 'em!

Well well, and I thought it was gonna be a slow day. Wanna party?

Forget I even asked. Let's talk about something else.



Falling in the abyss will kill your character, so take care.



Here - let's just save you the trouble, shall we?



Some foes are truly epic in scale. Some are just big.

with a mate in tow, taking down scorpions and stabbing criminals is clearly where the game shows its true colours and here it can be great fun, playing much like a latter day *Gauntlet* or *Smash TV*. Nonetheless, despite the undoubted brilliance of smashing and looting with a friend by your side, it still gets pretty dull disappointingly quickly. The lack of influence in your character's identity or development severely reduces your connection to him or her. Aside from tweaking a few skills and picking a few new weapons, you have no real say about how you portray yourself in this world. Even the

equipment choices you get seem somewhat reductive and rarely, if ever, is it more than the choice between keeping what you have and upgrading to unequivocally better gear. When compared to the choices laid down by the *Dark Alliance* titles, let alone the degree of customisation promised by *Champions of Norrath* (reviewed last issue), *Fallout - Brotherhood of Steel* suffers badly by comparison. There simply isn't enough choice or variety to make players feel that they're building a unique fighting bastard all of their own. Because this customisation of characters is so central to games of this nature, its omission really hurts.

So, this is not quite the 'Dark Alliance with guns' that we'd hoped for then. When compared

"ANYONE WHO HAS EVER PLAYED A DARK ALLIANCE TITLE WILL IMMEDIATELY FEEL AT HOME - THE DIFFERENCES ARE MINIMAL."

to the pure, albeit slightly nerdy, fantasy settings of the *Dark Alliance* titles, *Fallout - Brotherhood of Steel* seems oddly stripped down. When a game consists of little more than repeatedly hammering the two attack buttons over and over again, any further simplification is going to leave some pretty big holes. The real joy of dungeon slashers is to be found in watching your character turn from a big girl's blouse into the world's hardest man. Removing anything even slightly geeky from the game in an attempt to widen the demographic has left it far too simple for all but the most action-fixated. And when you take into account that *Fallout - Brotherhood of Steel* will be one of four near identical titles on the shelves (see panel), this lack of depth really starts to sting. There's much fun to be had here, most notably when there are two players laying down the pain within the post-apocalyptic wasteland, but not quite enough.

/ MARK SORRELL

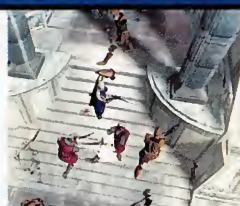
FALLOUT AND THE FACIAL FUZZ-O-METER

FOUR SIMILAR GAMES RANKED BY HIRSUTE CELEBRITY FACES.



BALDUR'S GATE: DARK ALLIANCE

Best at: The original and most tightly paced adventure. Still looks good and, most importantly, it's cheap too.
Worst at: It's a fairly short adventure in comparison to its younger brothers.
Beard rating: A Brian Blessed bushy bird's nest.



BALDUR'S GATE: DARK ALLIANCE 2

Best at: A huge adventure with a clever 'build your own weapon' feature.
Worst at: Maximum of two players, bland graphics and insanely repetitive; this is weaker than the prequel.
Beard rating: A dishevelled, post-booze binge George Best.



FALLOUT: BROTHERHOOD OF STEEL

Best at: The only game here not based on a fantasy world populated by orcs and goblins. Unusual sense of humour.
Worst at: Not enough depth in character advancement and full of pointless swearing.
Beard rating: Neat but lacking substance Craig David fuzz.



CHAMPIONS OF NORRATH

Best at: The most beautiful and cleverly designed of the bunch. Also offers online play.
Worst at: Quests can be confusing and disjointed. Features some insanely difficult boss battles.
Beard rating: A Fidel Castro full facial covering.

PSW VERDICT

UPPERS

- > Mindlessly violent
- > Big adventure
- > Some customisation
- > Co-operative play

DOWNERS

- > Mindlessly violent
- > Too much f***ing swearing
- > Graphically limited
- > Insufficient scope or depth

GRAPHICS > About as average as they come.

5

SOUNDS > Moderate voice acting.

6

GAMEPLAY > Insanely repetitive and lacking depth.

5

OVERALL SCORE

A simple game idea made even simpler, and in this case too simple. Full of pointless swearing, much of which is embarrassing and dilutes what humour is present. Go for *Dark Alliance* instead.

6

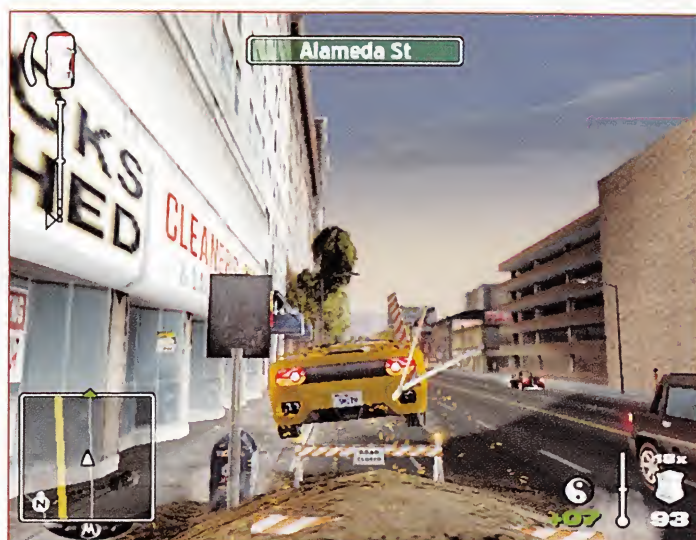
26 THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN TRUE CRIME: STREETS OF LA

Steering Nick Kang safely through the missions and trying to chat up his partner aren't the only sources of fun to found in *True Crime*. Ever thought of playing as a donkey?



1 SIP ON GIN AND JUICE WITH SNOOP

Laid back, with our mind on our money and our money on our mind. Collect the 30 golden Dogg Bones to unlock Snoop and the Dogg Patrol mission and cruise the boulevards on a mission to right wrongs, fire up some blunts and churn out some fine-ass West Coast hip hop.



2 DRIVE ON TWO WHEELS NOT FOUR

Make like Starsky and Hutch and Bodie and Doyle by getting your motor on two wheels and then glide through the slenderest of gaps. Great for getting through traffic jams and makes jumping a far more interesting experience too.

3 GO REALLY FAST AND REALLY HIGH

Get to the end of the car upgrades and you'll then receive the Nitro boost. Combine this with the fastest car, the 'light car' cheat and a jump and you'll be able to gain the sort of air more usually associated with astronauts and sky divers.



4 GET YOUR TITS OUT AND YOUR HEELS ON

Although being able to pee while standing up is a God-given right no self-respecting man would ever want to give up, sometimes we all long for the smell of roses when we fart. Being a topless lady could be a laugh too. Enter the number plate B00B to own breasts.



5 PUT SOME EXTRA BLING IN YOUR LIFE

Enter the arena of the world's least honourable profession and slap some bitches, pimp style. By setting your number plate to P1MP you'll have access to the biggest, furriest coat and the most extravagant hat ever seen in a video game. Ever.



6 LET THE DEAD WALK THE EARTH

Feeling a little under the weather? You look ill. Wait a minute, you're a zombie! Luckily, being dead is no barrier to a successful career in the police force these days. Enter J1MM as your number plate and soon you too can be oozing slime all over the carpet.



7 PILE 'EM UP BLUES BROTHERS STYLE

So many pretty cars driving around, all looking as new as the day they left the factory. This cannot be allowed to pass. Creating the ultimate pile-up is almost mandatory and with so many cars to choose from you're spoilt for choice.



8 BEAT UP THE WOMENFOLK

Fail episode three and you'll go down the alternate story path and get access to the 'Cat Fight' level. This basically entails a massive ruck in a club full of scantily-clad beauties. You won't be able to leave before you've beaten them all up.



9 BE A COMPLETE BASTARD TO ALL

Go completely mental and smash up loads of stuff, kill people randomly and then smash up some more stuff. Why? Because you can, that's why. See how far down the Bad Cop slope you can slide. It's much more fun than playing at being a saint.

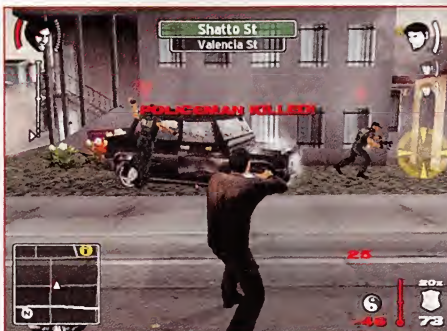


Nick Kang is all yours to do with as you like. Well, almost.



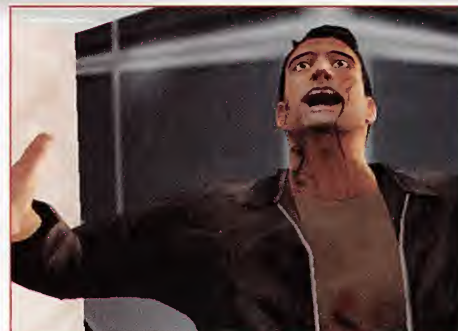
10 BECOME AN ANGEL AND UPHOLD THE LAW

You are Nick Kang and Nick Kang is an officer of the law. Uphold and serve your way through the random missions around the city to see just how far up the Good Cop ladder you can climb. Getting up to 100 will take some time but it's possible.



11 SURVIVE THE SUPER HARD SWAT TEAM

Shoot enough innocent folks and the SWAT team will eventually turn up. A right bunch of double hard bastards they are too. Attracting their interest is just a matter of shooting up loads of innocent people. But staying alive once they turn up is somewhat harder.



12 BE COMPLETELY RUBBISH AND FAIL EVERYTHING

Can't be bothered actually completing any of those pesky missions? Then don't bother. There's always an option to continue after every failed mission, try taking them all and see where you get. No, we're not going to tell you what happens. Find out yourself!

13 THERE IS NO 13. WE'RE SUPERSTITIOUS FOLK.



14 LIMP TO THE FIRST ENDING

Fail the finale of 'International Ties' and you'll be sent down the 'Con Girls' route. Get through that and you'll end up in a rooftop battle with General Kim. Despite his soppy name he's triple hard to beat. Do so and you'll see the first ending.



15 WALK TO THE SECOND ENDING

Fail the finale of 'The Rescue' and you'll be sent off down the 'Rampage' path. Get to the end of that and you'll fight the man who killed your father. He's even harder than General Kim but 'do' him and you'll see the second ending.



16 CHARGE TO THE THIRD ENDING

Make it through the whole game without failing any missions. You'll end up fighting General Kim again, but this time he's even tougher *and* on fire. Defeat him if you can and you'll unlock the ultimate ending.



17 LEARN TO WRESTLE LIKE THE ROCK

That Rock, eh? He's a bit hard by all accounts. Unlocking the fight bonuses will give you access to grappling moves of immense power. You too will be able to throw a huge man into a table. Can you smell what The Rock is cooking?



18 BECOME HARDER THAN BRUCE LEE

Completing the fight upgrades will give you access to some insanely powerful attacks that will dispense with lesser enemies in a single hit. Also keep an ear out for the *Mortal Kombat* and *Street Fighter* references.

"ENTER J1MM AS YOUR NUMBER PLATE AND YOU TOO CAN OOZE SLIME ALL OVER THE CARPET."



19 BECOME A SHARPSHOOTER

By passing all of the gun upgrade missions you'll end up a sharp-shooting mentalist. Cheating your way to the top will give you huge guns but doing it the man's way will also give you the skill to use them. Go on, we dare you.



20 BE BRUCE WILLIS IN A DIRTY VEST

While your driving along go into precision aiming mode and shoot at the number plate of the car in front. If you do this correctly, the car will instantly explode and you'll drive under the burning wreckage. Just like Bruce Willis in one of his cheesy action films. We're not entirely sure which one, but we'd hazard a guess he wore a vest in it.



Will you steer Nick down the Good Cop or the Bad Cop route?



21 DRIVE FOREVER TO REACH THE OTHER SIDE

It's no accident that *True Crime* is subtitled *Streets of LA* — there's at least 250 square miles of the city to drive your way round. The best way to truly appreciate its size is to try driving from one side to the other. It'll take you at least 15 minutes and you'll never get that time back, but hey...



22 CAPTURE A CANNIBAL AND BREAK UP THE DEMO

While you're driving around you'll be called upon to intervene in all manner of ridiculous crimes. Most of them are fairly standard muggings and grand theft auto affairs. But watch out for the one where you must apprehend Hungry Hector the cannibal. And then there's the bizarre anti-game protest too. Weird.



23 PLAY AS ROSIE IN HER SMALLS

Want to see what Nick's Latino partner Rosie has going on under the hood? Enter HURT M3 as your number plate and you can play as the lady in question, stripped to her rather fetching underwear. Mmm. We actually think she looks better with her clothes on. But there you go. That's just us.



24 MAKE AN ASS OF YOURSELF

Literally in this case. We tried to think of something better than playing the game as a donkey in a gimp mask, being a pimp, driving about shooting people but we couldn't. Set your number plate to JASS to get you hands on the mule. This has to be the best secret in the game. The mule even walks like Kang.



25 SLEEP ON PARK BENCHES AND SCARE CHILDREN

If there's nothing you like more than drinking special brew, shouting obscenities at passers-by, fondling your love parts in public and smelling of piss, then this is the only life for you. Roam the streets of LA as a tramp by creating the number plate B00Z. No ties. No hassles. No commitments. That's the life for us.



26 BIG TROUBLE IN LITTLE CHINA

For no discernable reason whatsoever, the game takes a crazy trip into Chinese mythology around the half way mark. One minute you're wisecracking your way around sunny LA, busting the Mafia and pulling in small-time crooks, the next some old guy is making you fight a massive dragon. Crazy yet inspired.

GAME BREAKER

■ Delivering the best tips and cheats for the biggest games every month.

JAMES BOND: EVERYTHING OR NOTHING

These cheat codes will liven up the latest barnstorming Bond game, but you won't be able to activate them until the required number of Platinum awards have been collected in the game. And, please, try not to break anything, 007...

GOLDEN GUN

Unlock with 1 Platinum award. Pause the game and press
0, ▲, X, 0, ▲

IMPROVED TRACTION

Unlock with 3 Platinum awards. Pause the game and press
0, X (x2), □, ▲

IMPROVED BATTERY

Unlock with 5 Platinum awards. Pause the game and press
0, □ (x2), X, 0

DOUBLE AMMUNITION

Unlock with 7 Platinum awards. Pause the game and press
0 (x2), X, 0, ▲

DOUBLE DAMAGE

Unlock with 9 Platinum awards. Pause the game and press
0, ▲ (x2), □, 0

FULL AMMUNITION

Unlock with 11 Platinum awards. Pause the game and press
0 (x2), ▲, □ (x2)

CLOAK

Unlock with 13 Platinum awards. Pause the game and press
0, ▲, X, ▲, □

FULL BATTERY

Unlock with 15 Platinum awards. Pause the game and press
0, ▲ (x2), X, 0

ALL WEAPONS

Unlock with 17 Platinum awards. Pause the game and press
0, ▲, X (x2), 0

UNLIMITED BATTERY

Unlock with 19 Platinum awards. Pause the game and press
0, □, 0, □, ▲

UNLIMITED AMMUNITION

Unlock with 23 Platinum games. Pause the game and press
0, X, □, X, 0

SLOW MOTION DRIVING

Unlock with 25 Platinum awards. Pause the game and press
0, □, ▲, X, ▲

PLATINUM GUN

Unlock with 27 Platinum awards. Pause the game and press
0, □ (x2), 0, X



Cheat of the Month



KILL SWITCH

If you'd like to replay this tactical blaster with as many bullets as you like, you'll need to enter this code after you've completed the game.

INFINITE AMMUNITION
L1, R1, □, □ or L1, R1, ▲, □, □



GOBLIN COMMANDER



To cheat at this war sim, hold down L1, R1, Triangle and Down for three seconds during play, then enter one of the following codes. A message will confirm you've entered the cheat correctly.

GOD MODE
R1 (x3), L1 (x3), R1, L1, ▲, R1

AUTO WIN
R1 (x2), L1 (x3), R1 (x2), ▲ (x3)

LEVEL SELECT

▲ (x3), L1, R1, L1 (x2), R1, L1, R1 (x2), L1, R1, L1 (x2), R1, L1, R1, L1 (x2), R1, L1 (x2), R1, L1, R1 (x2), ▲ (x3)

FOG OF WAR

R1, L1, R1 (x2), L1 (x2), ▲ (x2), L1, R1

DECREASE SPEED TO 50%

L1 (x5), ▲ (x4), R1

SONIC HEROES



Sonic the Hedgehog's latest game is full of extras to unlock by collecting emblems in either the single-player or challenge mode.

TWO-PLAYER BOBSLED MODE
Collect 80 emblems

TWO-PLAYER EXPERT RACE MODE
Collect 120 emblems

TWO-PLAYER QUICK RACE MODE
Collect 100 emblems

TWO-PLAYER RING RACE MODE
Collect 60 emblems

TWO-PLAYER SPECIAL STAGE MODE
Collect 40 emblems

TWO-PLAYER TEAM BATTLE MODE
Collect 20 emblems

FOLLOW ME SONG
Beat the Story Mode with Team Rose

LAST STORY
Complete all 4 other stories and collect all Chaos Emeralds

SUPER HARD DIFFICULTY
Collect all 141 emblems

TEAM CHAOTIX MOVIE
Beat Story Mode with Team Chaotix

TEAM CHAOTIX SONG
Beat Story Mode with Team Chaotix

DOWNHILL DOMINATION



You'll have to enter these codes very quickly during gameplay. Enter the unlock code first to get the rest to work properly.

UNLOCK CODE:
↑, ▲, ↓, ×, ←, ○, →, □

\$2,000 INSTANTLY
→, ▲, ▲, ←

ADRENALINE BOOST
↓, ←, ←, →

ALWAYS STOKED
↓, □, □, ←, ○

ANTI GRAVITY
↓, ▲, □, □, ↑

COMBAT FREE CODE
→, □, ○, □, ←

COMBAT UPGRADE
↑, ↓, ←, ←, →

ENERGY RESTORE
↓, →, →, ←, ←

FREE MONEY
→, ↑, ↑, ○, ○, □

INFINITE BOTTLES
↑, ×, ←, ←, ○, ○

MEGA FLIP
→, ↑, ↑, →, →, □

SPEED FREAK
↓, ▲, →, →, □

STOKE TRICK METER
↓, ←, ←, →, →

SUPER BOUNCE
←, □, ×, ↑, ▲

UNLIMITED ENERGY
↓, ▲, ←, ←, □

UNLOCK EVERYTHING
↑, ↓, ↓, ↑, ↑, ↓, ↓



FINDING NEMO



'Floundering' with this fishy title? Enter these at the title 'bream'. Sorry, screen. God, we're so funny.

LEVEL SELECT:
▲ {x3}, □ {x2}, ○, □, ▲, ○, □, ▲, □, ▲, □, ▲, ○, ▲ {x2} Pause the game to access the level select menu.

INVINCIBILITY:
▲, □ {x2}, ○ {x3}, ▲ {x2}, □ {x3}, ○ {x4}, □, ▲, ○ {x3}, □, ○, ▲,

○ {x2}, □, ○ {x2}, ▲, ○, □, ○ {x3}, ▲ This cheat won't work on every level.

CREDITS:
▲, □, ○, ▲ {x2}, □, ○, ▲, □, ○, ▲, □ {x2}, ○, ▲, □, ○, ▲, □, ○ {x2}, ▲, □, ○

SECRET LEVEL:
▲, □, ○ {x2}, □, ▲ {x2}, □, ○ {x2}, □, ▲ {x2}, ○, □, ▲,

□, ○ {x2}, □, ▲ Pause the game to access the level select menu.



ASK THE BOFFIN

Your queries fed direct into the giant cranium of our resident games boffin.

PRINCE OF GRIEVES

I heard you can get the original version of *Prince of Persia* in the new game when you complete it, but for some reason this didn't work on my copy. Have I been misinformed or is my copy of the game bust or something?
Amos Hong, Sydney

According to my calculations, you will only register as having completed the game if you save after the credits, thus ensuring 100% completion. Try this and you will receive immediate satisfaction.

NOT SO NICE CITY

When I took my *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City* save on a memory card round to my mate's house, my save wouldn't work on his machine. Is my card faulty or is it the fault of his dumb-ass console?
Kevin French, French's Forest

Neither. While the Boffin celebrates game save interchange in all its forms, it is incumbent upon me to point out that this noble activity runs into problems with *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City*. A game save from the double pack version of either *GTA* game won't work on the original, single release version, and vice versa. You'll need to bring your game round too if you want to show off.

TWILIGHT MY FIRE

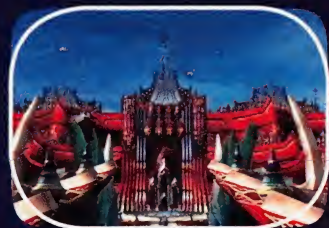
Where can I find the third volume of the *Spirit Dictionary* in *Arc: Twilight of the Spirits*? It's driving me mad.
Lisa Rettle, Bankstown

Well stroke my imaginary beard – an adventure game question! Go to Sulfas in Epistia, and enter the room on the left. Walk along the catwalk ahead and turn left at the wall. The *Spirit Dictionary* is on the floor by some barrels.

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